LITERARY RELIQUES

OF

JOSEPH STRUTT.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

QUEENHOO-HALL,

A Romance:

AND

ANCIENT TIMES,

A DRAMA.

BY THE LATE

JOSEPH STRUTT,

AUTHOR OF "RURAL SPORTS AND PASTIMES OF THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND," &c.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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QUEENHOO-HALL;

BEING

A HISTORY OF TIMES PAST.

CHAPTER III.

Lady Emma's History continued.

"It appeared, that a delirium ensued upon my being recovered from my fainting fit, and that my constant cry was for the restoration of my murdered brother. The unfeeling people of the inn had sent for a magistrate, and were actually proceeding to examine me, notwithstanding I was deprived of my senses; but at that moment the arrival of an English nobleman at the inn prevented the continu-

ance of those indignities to which I had been exposed. He was informed of the principal circumstances relating to my case, and compassionately interested himself in my behalf; procuring an admission for me into the convent of Black Nuns, where I now found myself, and which is at no great distance from the inn; and in order that I might be enabled to procure proper vouchers in behalf of my character and connections, if it should please the Father of mercies to restore me to my senses, he left a sum of money in the hands of the abbess."——

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the baron. "By the holy mass, but it is passing strange!"

Emma was surprised at this interruption, and paused. Matilda, who had observed that her father was greatly affected by the latter part of the fair stranger's story, and had made several involuntary ejaculations, took the opportunity of this interval to enquire if he was well.

The baron, awakened from his reverie by the questions his daughter had put to him, replied, "Yes, my child, perfectly well; but this is wonderful."

"What, my good lord?" said Matilda. But without returning her any answer, the baron enquired of Emma if she had never heard the name of that nobleman.

"Never, my lord," rejoined the lady, "though I made great enquiries. I only learned, that he belonged to the suit of the Earl of Warwick, then Regent of France, and residing at Abbeville. But may the choicest blessings of Heaven reward him for his benevolence to an unfortunate maiden! for surely some protecting saint sent him at that moment to rescue me from inevitable destruction."

"He is happy, my dear madam, in having your orisons," answered the baron. "From the moment you entered the room, I thought I had seen you."—Here the fair stranger, with astonishment, cast her eyes upon the

baron.—" But," added he, " I could not call to my recollection when or where: the alteration of three years has not been disadvantageous to those charming features, which then appeared so captivating, even in the midst of grief."

While Lord Boteler was thus speaking, Matilda and Eleanor sat alternately looking at each other, and then at him; and the moment he concluded, Emma threw herself at his feet, pressed his hand with extacy to her lips, exclaiming, " Was Lord Boteler, then, my guardian angel! Was it you that saved me from disgrace and ruin! What words shall I find to express my gratitude!"

The baron raised her from the ground, and embracing her with the affection of a father, begged she would not conceive herself to be under the least obligation to him. " I knew not," said he, " the worth of the object I relieved, but did it from the simple motives of common humanity; being perfectly convinced, from your appearance and

deportment, that you were suffering in a manner that you could not possibly have merited." So saying, he led her back to her seat, and she burst into tears.

The baron thought that she would find relief from their effusion, and therefore did not attempt to interrupt her; but addressed himself to his daughter, and her fair cousin, in this manner: "You seem surprised at what has happened; and, indeed, it is not strange that you should be so, yet this adventure will be easily developed, when you recollect, that about three years back, I was sent for suddenly to the court, and as suddenly dispatched with letters of great importance to the Earl of Warwick at Abbeville. I was successful in my journey, and delivered my commission in less time than is usual upon such an occasion. While the Earl was preparing his answers, I obtained permission to visit Amiens; and, returning to Abbeville by a circuitous rout, came to the inn where this lady had met with so uncomfortable a recep-

tion, and upon the very morning of her misfortunes. I had no intention of stopping at this place; but, just as I was passing by the gate, the girth of my horse's saddle broke, and it was with much difficulty that I escaped a fall to the ground, being dismounted without any accident. I walked to the inn, in order to wait until a new girdle could be procured, and adapted to the saddle. Upon my entry, I was, with great obsequiousness, ushered into the best room; but I saw the people running about with so much confusion, that it excited my curiosity to enquire into the cause; I therefore desired the servant, who was waiting my order, to inform his master, that I would speak to him. Some minutes, however, elapsed before the innkeeper made his appearance. He apologized for having made me wait; "But, I hope your honour will excuse me," added he; "for, by the holy-rood mass, I was never so abashed in my life before." "You seem, indeed," said I, "in a state of agitation. Has any thing frightened you?" "Frighted!

your honour, ay, marry, am I, and ruined into the bargain! In short, I am tricked, I am robbed, and by a silken butterfly." He then informed me, that the accident happened the preceding night: That his suspicion fell upon a genteel youth, who came with a lady he called his sister, to shelter themselves there from the thunder-storm: That, in the morning early, the young chevalier had disappeared; but that they had detained the lady, who was also prepared for her escape. He further informed me, that a bailiff of the district was then taking her examination: "but," added he, "she is perilous obstinate; and, instead of confessing the truth, as your honour knows she ought to do, she falls into fits, and raves like one that is stark wode." This harangue increased the anxiety I had to see her; and I was the more especially induced to do so, because he had dropped some expressions that led me to conceive, that she was acquainted with the English language, and

probably of that country. I therefore insisted upon his conducting me to the chamber where this examination was taking place; "For if it should prove," said I, "that she is an Englishwoman, I am her countryman, and, perhaps, I may prevail upon her to be more explicit with me, than she would be with a foreigner." He acquiesced with my demand without the least hesitation; and I was ushered into a large sleeping-room, where I first saw our lovely guest. She was lying upon the bed; her head raised high upon the bolster, and supported by a coarse ruddy wench, who, I afterwards learned, was the innkeeper's daughter. The hair of the fair sufferer was dishevelled, and fell in loose ringlets upon her shoulders. She then appeared to be perfectly collected; but the starting tears, in abundance, trembled down her cheeks. So interesting a scene I never witnessed before; and, prejudging the event, I said to myself, "May cancers rot the mouth, that dare ac-

cuse this lovely innocent!" At the foot of the bed, the magistrate had placed himself, with a table before him; and, at the moment of my entrance, was addressing himself to her, and endeavouring to extort a confession from her. She heard him attentively; then, heaving a deep sigh, she gently waved her head, saying, "Give me my brother; or tell me that he is living, and I shall die contented!" An answer of malevolent insolence was retorted by the hostess, who supposed it necessary for her to reply in support of the credit of the house; concluding her harangue with the declaration, that its inhabitants were neither thieves nor murderers. "Look!" exclaimed the lady, agitated by the word murderers, "look upon the bloody floor! look upon the gisarme stained with blood! and, I beseech you, as you hope for mercy at the bar of your Creator, speak the truth—say that it is not my brother's blood." Then clasping her hands in an agony of grief, she continued, "You

cannot do that. He is dead! he is dead! and what will become of me?" Her discourse then became wild and incoherent; and I saw that her removal was absolutely necessary for the preservation of her life. I therefore immediately interfered; and, addressing myself to the magistrate, requested some private conversation with him; but, added I, in the first place, command the room to be cleared, and let no one be permitted to approach the lady, but those of her own sex. The magistrate, judging from my habit, that I was a person of some authority, acquiesced. The room was vacated, and the lady, rescued from the impertinence of an unfeeling multitude that had surrounded her, closed her eyes, and seemed to seek repose. When the magistrate and I were in private, I took the liberty of delivering my sentiments to him in the following manner: "It is easily to be seen, that this unfortunate lady is not in a state to undergo a criminal examination. It is cer-

tain that her mind is much deranged; and, if I be not mistaken, she is in the paroxysm of a high fever. In her present situation, my dear sir, I am thoroughly convinced, that a physician is a much more proper person to pay her a visit, than an officer of justice; and, if one may be allowed to judge from her youth and external appearance, it is evident that she could never have been the associate of a common robber. Would such a man have left his companion behind him, whose voice might ensure his destruction? Reason militates against the idea, and you, I doubt not, will readily grant, that even the appearance of innocency, should, in a case like this before us, operate very powerfully in behalf of the suffering object: but do not imagine," continued I, seeing the magistrate looked very grave, "I mean in the least to insinuate, that no restriction should be laid upon her person. It is necessary, for justice sake, that she should bring forward proper vouchers re-

specting her family and connections, and that the situation she now appears in should be developed, and her innocence properly established, before she is set at full liberty; but, at the same time, it is equally just, that she should be treated with tenderness and delicacy. I do beseech you, therefore, for the sake of humanity, that you would cause her to be removed from this place, where the sight of the people, and every object around her, recurs to disturb her mind." "I have been thinking," replied the magistrate, who seemed to be moved by my appeal to his feelings, "how this matter can be accomplished, so as to give satisfaction to all parties, and make no infringement upon the claims of justice. I have a relation, a woman of great respectability, who is the prioress of a convent of Black Nuns, not more than a quarter of a league from this place. If she can be prevailed upon to receive her, and upon my recommendation I have no doubt she will, every

good purpose will be answered. She will be properly attended by the physician belonging to the convent, treated with the greatest humanity, and not be conscious of confinement, until such time as she is perfectly able to answer for herself." "My good friend," said I, grasping his hand, "this is the very thing that I desire: they tell me she is my countrywoman, of course, her distresses are mine; but, I beseech you, let the matter be settled with all dispatch; for I am determined not to stir from this house, before I see her removed." He acceded to my entreaty, and set about the business with earnestness; and, in less than an hour returned, with the pleasing information, that all things were prepared for the reception of the fair stranger at the convent. I then ascended the stairs, in order to communicate to her what had been done in her favour; but was informed by the inn-keeper's daughter, that she was in a state of perfect insensibility, and paid not

the least attention to what was passing about her. I caused a litter to be procured, and saw her carefully placed therein; and sent six of my servitors, accompanied by the pursuivant, to whom the magistrate had given proper directions, to conduct her to the convent, where she was received with every mark of respect and humanity."

At this instant, Emma clasped her hands together, and elevating her eyes to Heaven, uttered an ejaculation in silence. The baron saw her emotion, but without taking the least notice of it, thus proceeded. "Being once more alone with the bailiff, I recalled to his mind the last words of coherency that were uttered by the lady, which, he assured me, had not escaped his notice; "But," added he, "I saw not the gisarme, nor the drops of blood upon the floor." "But perhaps," said I, "this was not the room in which the accident happened." He assured me it was; because the cabinet had been pointed out to

him that stood in the corner, and which had escaped my notice. We therefore summoned the inn-keeper, who seemed to come reluctantly before us, and not to be pleased with the departure of his guest. I therefore addressed myself to him upon that subject, assuring him, that what had been done was not to protect the guilty, but to give to the unfortunate young lady a fair opportunity of proving her innocence. "Innocence, indeed!" said he, surlily; "I am sure that I am robbed, and how can she be innocent? but the weakest, I find, must always go to the wall." Finding that he did not properly comprehend my meaning, I placed my argument upon another ground. "You must know," said I, "that nothing uttered by the young lady in the state of a delirium can be essential, either to acquit or condemn her, in a court of justice. She is now apparently in a high fever; and if she should die, every hope must die with her, if she be guilty, of your

obtaining any information respecting the property you have lost. Where we have placed her for the present, she will be taken proper care of; and when she is restored to her right mind, will then be able to answer every legal question you may wish to propose. She is not withdrawn from justice; but rather secured, that justice may be done. For my part, I must leave the determination of this mysterious adventure to your own provincial magistrates." "These be fine words," replied the churl, with a sneer; "but they do not bring back my plate, no, nor replace my gold, nor mend my cabinet: yet," continued he, recollecting himself, and lowering his tone, "I hope your honour will not wrong a poor inn-keeper; for woe betide me, but it is a hard case!" "It is a hard case," answered I; "but certainly the preservation of the life of the lady, at all events, is a matter that ought not to be indifferent to you:—but this is not the reason we called for you

at present," continued I; and without giving him the least cause to suspect that we were seeking for evidence against him, requested to examine the broken cabinet. He went with us, and while he was expatiating upon the heaviness of his loss, I scrutinized every part of the room; but there was no appearance of blood upon the floor, or any such weapon as she had mentioned. I was then inclined to think, that this part of her declaration was the effect of a disordered imagination, and was preparing to leave the room, when, turning over a piece of tapestry with my foot that had been laid beneath the chair in which the bailiff was sitting when I first entered the room, I perceived a dampness, evidently proceeding from that portion of the floor's having been recently washed. This induced me to remove the tapestry entirely, and then the stains of blood appeared very evident, hastily smeared over; and the tapestry, without doubt, had been placed there

to hide the suspicious marks, which time had not permitted to be obliterated. The innkeeper seemed to be much confused at the discovery, which I observed, and, without giving him time to study any evasion, commanded him, in a peremptory tone of voice, to produce the gisarme that had so much affected the lady. He changed colour upon hearing the weapon named; and after some hesitation,—"What did your honour say?" replied he, with a trembling accent. I repeated the demand, and sternly said I would not be trifled with. "Your honour speaks of the gisarme—Yes, yes, it is true enough, there was a gisarme." "And it was stained with blood," said I. "By my fay, I know not that," returned the host. "But where is this gisarme? I do not see it here," said I. "Indeed, your honour," answered he, "I am as innocent as the child unborn: I do not know what they have done with the gisarme." I then insisted upon his producing it imme-

diately, declaring, that I would not stir until I had seen it. Finding that no evasion could be made, he at last informed us, that it had been thrust under the bed, because the lady fell into fits at the sight of it. He then pulled it out, and was attempting to wipe it with the skirt of his tunic, saying, at the same time, "I do not think it is bloody, your honour." I prevented him from effecting his design, and snatching it from him, plainly perceived the marks of blood upon it. I then looked earnestly at him, and shook my head: he seemed much confused, and cast his eyes upon the ground. I then pointed to the wet floor; "And for what purpose was this recent washing?" said I; "these, also, are drops of blood." "By the holy mass bell," exclaimed the host, "I know not of the washing! I suppose the women did it to make the room fit for the reception of his worship the bailiff. By the blessed rood cross, I am as innocent as a new-born child; and for that

axe, it is none of mine; but it lay upon the floor when I entered the room this morning." "Perhaps," said I, "it belonged to the young chevalier." "I do not know that; I lighted him myself to this chamber last night, and I will make oath upon the holy Evangelists that he had no such weapon." This circumstance induced the magistrate to think the host had no hand in the murder; "for," says he, "it is possible, that some villains may have entered the house in the night, murdered the young gentleman, and committed the robbery." "But what then is become of the body?" said I. "The thieves from abroad, whose business it is to elude detection, by getting at a distance with all possible speed, would hardly have encumbered themselves with the breathless body of a murdered man; especially, as the booty, which it seems they have taken with them, was sufficiently burthensome." "I own," replied the magistrate, "that this part of the

transaction is inexplicable to me. I will, however, cause the strictest search to be made for the body of the chevalier, and keep the gisarme; time may, perhaps, point out its owner, and lead to the developement of this mystery." At this moment a courier from the Earl of Warwick, who had been sent from Amiens in search of me, and who had traced me to the inn, delivered me letters, which ordered me to return to Abbeville without delay. I was therefore obligated to depart immediately, and leave the developement of the adventure to the bailiff and his assistants. I, however, recommended the lady strongly to his protection, and begged him to do justice to all parties. I then took my leave, promising to return in the course of two or three days, if circumstances permitted; being exceedingly anxious to know what the event would be of so singular an incident. In this, however, I was disappointed; for on my arrival at Abbeville, I was charged that very

evening with dispatches for England: and I executed my commission with such punctuality, that I reached Calais early the next morning, and thence proceeded to London, where his Majesty held his court. My departure from Abbeville was urged by the regent with so much importunity, that it was some time before I recollected my remissness in not having engaged the bailiff to impart to me by letter the sequel of his examinations. I had not acquainted him with my name, or given him any directions, by which such information could have been conveyed to me; and for my part, I was equally ignorant how to address him. Since that time, I have had no opportunity of hearing any thing further relative to that strange event; and little did I expect, at this time, so happily to meet with the lovely object of my solicitude."

Here the baron concluded his narrative; and a short silence evinced the effect it had

upon the ladies. Eleanor was the first that resumed the conversation; and addressed herself to Emma, pressing her hand at the same time, and said, "My dear Lady Darcy, we are much interested by the history of your unparalleled sufferings, and, of course, exceedingly anxious to hear the sequel. Surely this gloomy night of adversity will terminate in a cheerful and cloudless morning."

Emma elevated her eyes, which were still bathed with tears, and shook her head, saying, "The night of adversity, my dearest lady, is by no means closed: permit me to mourn my woes in silence. Why should I make you melancholy with the needless relation of private sorrows."

"Indeed," said Matilda, "we must claim the privilege of sympathizing with you; and for that very reason, indulge us with the continuation of your adventures."

The fair Emma then heaved a sigh, and thus proceeded:—"As soon as it was known

that I had recovered the use of my reason, the officer of justice, mentioned by his lordship, waited upon me, attended by a Franciscan friar. The former acquainted me with the grounds of the accusation preferred against me by the inn-keeper, of which I had not a very perfect recollection. The latter recommended me to quiet my conscience, if I was guilty, by a full and candid confession. I informed the holy father, that I was very ready to comply with his advice; and then briefly related to them my unfortunate story, and intreated that my dear friend at Beaumont might be applied to without delay; who, I assured them, would give them perfect satisfaction respecting the truth of every thing that I had asserted concerning myself or my family. When the bailiff had heard that my parentage and connections were so respectable, he politely assured me, that he was sorry the forms of justice required him to detain me, until an attestment could

be procured from my friend at Beaumont. I begged him to make himself perfectly easy upon that subject; "because," said I, "it would be highly improper for the daughter of a nobleman to fly from an attestment. It is her duty to demand it, nor to leave behind her the least shadow of ground for malevolence to fix a stain upon her character." I then earnestly requested him to make every possible enquiry respecting my unfortunate brother. "It would be," said I, weeping, "a satisfaction, though a melancholy one, to see his breathless body reposed in the sacred cemetery, with those ceremonies his rank demands; at least, with that decency which Christian piety will certainly afford." I then learned, that unremitted enquiries had been made, and every part of the inn most carefully searched to discover the body of my dear brother. The bailiff also informed me, that the inn-keeper, with the family, and all his servants, had undergone a long and particular

examination respecting the gisarme stained with blood; but nothing had transpired sufficiently strong against any of them to justify a criminal prosecution: on the contrary, from their united testimony, it appeared, that the house had been robbed, and that the innkeeper had sustained a considerable loss. The owner of the gisarme could not be traced; but to him we must attribute both the robbery and the murder, leaving to the just determination of an all-wise Providence to develope, at his good pleasure, this mysterious event."

CHAPTER IV.

Lady Emma's History continued.

"AFTER an interval of three days, I was desired to attend the lady prioress in her own apartment. I was not in the least surprized at this summons; for I had been indulged the day before with an interview. I was received with great politeness. The good lady heard my melancholy narrative with great compassion; and from the tenderness of her expression, I conceived that she interested herself in my behalf. It was with pleasure, therefore, that I repeated the visit. On entering into her chamber, I found her alone.—" Approach, my dear Lady Darcy," said she, with great affability. " I have tidings for you, which, though they cannot

remove the cause of your sorrows, may yet, in some measure, tend to render them less poignant:—your innocence is established beyond the reach of the most scrupulous suspicion." "Oh, my dearest lady," replied I, hastily, "the messenger is certainly returned from Beaumont." "He is," replied the prioress; "and I would advise you not to be greatly surprized, if you should soon see your good friend in person; for it is his intention to wait upon you, and condole with you upon this melancholy occasion." Perceiving that I was much agitated by her address, she changed the discourse for a few minutes; and when my mind was a little more tranquil, returning to the same subject, she at last informed me, that my ever-respected benefactor was actually arrived, and waited to see me. I will not attempt to describe my feelings at our meeting. Notwithstanding the manner in which the lady prioress had prepared me for the interview, joy, grief, and a

variety of other conflicting passions, took possession of my mind at the same instant; and it was only by an effusion of tears that I could obtain relief. What did the good old man not say to soothe my sorrows! How pathetic was his language of condolement! How generous his offers of protection! Had my dear father returned from the grave to my assistance, he could not have expressed his con cern for me with more soul-felt affection and delicacy. "My dear child," said he, gently grasping my hand at parting, "I will see you again to-morrow; in the mean time, I must request you to turn in your mind in what manner I can be serviceable to you; remembering always, that the daughter of my benefactor, Lord Darcy, is as dear to me as if I had myself been her parent.

"The next day he came according to his promise, and seemed very anxious for me to go back with him to Beaumont, and wait the return of letters from England. "Your un-

cle," said he, "must be made acquainted with this melancholy accident; for that purpose I have written to him. He will, I doubt not, provide for you a safe conveyance, and suitable to your rank; and, until something of that sort is done, you see that it will be impossible for you to go forward on your journey, without exposing yourself to rapacity and insult." I received this new instance of his regard for my welfare with the deepest sense of gratitude; but I excused myself from accepting his pressing invitation, "as every object there would incessantly recal to my mind the pleasing hours of childhood, and renew, with aggravated misery, the accumulated sorrows that now distract it. These perpetual companions would be a continual torment, and my melancholy, my dearest benefactor, might even embitter that tranquility, which, it is my earnest petition to Heaven, you may ever enjoy. That well-known mansion, where my dear brother and myself

danced, as it were, through the gay scene of early life, emulous to promote each other's happiness, and free from every care;—the sight of that mansion would distract me. It would recal the horrors of that dreadful night, when I lost that brother;—his sufferings;—but, all-gracious Heaven! who knows how extensive those sufferings may have been?—Oh, dearest brother! had you expired in the way that nature appoints, I might have wept over you, and closed your eyes in death. This severe duty, affection would have commanded me to perform. I should then have looked up to Heaven with submission; sung thy requiem; and had the doleful satisfaction, at least, of seeing an end of all thy pain. Oh, my Redeemer!—yes, I trust in thee."

Here Emma, elevating her lovely eyes, glistering with tears, was silent for a few moments; when, recollecting herself, she turned to the company, and renewed her speech. "Pardon, I beseech you, my lord, and dear

ladies, this digressive apostrophe; my mind was bewildered, and the recollection of what passed upon that mournful occasion led me from the subject unconsciously."

"But to proceed. My friend's benefactor seemed somewhat chagrined at my refusal of his offer of protection.—" And how, my dear lady," said he, " will you then dispose of yourself?" " It would surely," returned I, " be an instance of the highest ingratitude in me to conceal the least circumstance of my present situation from you. I was yesterday introduced to an English lady of distinction, whose family residence is at Bellericay in Essex. This young lady's father, Sir John Tracy, dying about three years back, left his affairs in a very unsettled situation. He was possessed of several manors, but they were encumbered with high mortgages, so that Lady Tracy found herself involved in suits of the most expensive kind. She had one only daughter remaining, out of six children, at

the time of the knight's decease; and, being fearful that the issue of the law might prove unfavourable, she raised a sum of money upon her own dowry, and purchased, in that daughter's name, a small estate, by which she might be enabled to live, if not with magnificence, at least with comfort: but, at the same time, finding that her attention to tedious processes in the courts of judicature engrossed so much of her time, that she could not properly attend to the tuition of her daughter, then turned of twelve, she recollected that the lady-prioress of this convent was a distant relation of Sir John Tracy, and, therefore, thought she could not do better for the young lady than to send her hither, and here she has received such instructions as are necessary for her rank. Lady Tracy has settled with all the creditors of the deceased knight; the termination of the suits having proved more favourable than had been expected. She is now come herself into Picar-

dy, to conduct her daughter back to Bellericay. She has been acquainted with my name, which is familiar to her; for her residence is not above four leagues from Gay Bowers, the seat of my uncle. These ladies, with their suite, are to take their leave of the prioress to-morrow, and will return to England without delay, and it is my desire to embrace this opportunity of travelling with persons of my own sex; therefore, I am this day to be introduced to Lady Tracy, who, her daughter assures me, will be glad of my company. The only difficulty that remains, rests upon the determination of the officers of justice, by whose order I am detained; for I am uncertain if I be, at this moment, a prisoner or not." My benefactor expressed great satisfaction at the prospect of my returning so safely, and so comfortably, to my native country.—" Prepare yourself, my dear child," said he, without the least hesitation; " I will take care that nothing shall occur to detain

you. I will see you in the morning, previous to your departure, and give you letters to your uncle that may be of service to you; seeing that you have unfortunately lost the documents that were in your brother's possession:" so saying he took his leave.

"I was soon after introduced to Lady Tracy. She was a tall well-made woman, about fifty years of age; her countenance was exceedingly comely, and highly expressive of good-nature. She received me with great politeness, and seemed to be perfectly well acquainted with the circumstances that had occasioned my father to quit his native country. She assured me also, that she had frequently been in company with my uncle, the Baron St Clere; who, she told me, was much reserved in his manners, and possessed a certain sternness of countenance, which commanded, rather than inspired, respect. I felt some disquietude at this description of my

uncle, but a different turn in the conversation soon effaced it from my mind.

"The next morning my kind benefactor came very early, having his servants with him, who carried a mail, which he ordered them to lay upon a table in the middle of the room; this done, they retired. "My dear child," said he, "you must oblige me by accepting these few articles. It is necessary that you should have a sufficient change of dress, to appear to be the daughter of my best friend, and in this mail you will find them; the letters are also inclosed." I knew not what to say to him upon this new manifestation of his benevolence, and was preparing to answer him, when he thus proceeded: "I will not hear any reply, or take any denial. I owe much more than such trifling services to the favour of your deceased parent; and it is a source of great comfort to me, that it is in my power to mitigate, in

the smallest degree, the sufferings of so near and so dear a relative. I must, my good Lady Darcy, beg of you to promise me one thing, and that is, to deliver a small packet you will find in this mail according to the directions inscribed upon it." I promised him not to fail. He then seized my hand, pressed it to his lips, bathed with tears, and said, "Adieu, my dear lady: May good angels protect you! and may He, who suffered death upon the rood for all mankind, grant, that your future happiness may overbalance the afflictions you have undergone:" and so saying, presented me with the key of the mail. My heart was so full, I could not answer.— He took the advantage of this moment, hasted to the door, and shut it after him; so that I saw my worthy benefactor no more. I traversed the room several times in much agitation of mind, and it was a considerable time before I had the resolution to unlock the mail; and the first thing that struck my

sight was a packet with a direction on it. "This," said I to myself, "is certainly the packet my dear friend alluded to." I read the inscription, and was surprised to find it to this effect,—*For the young Lady Darcy, and for her use only.* Upon opening it, I found a gipsire, filled with angels and a gold noble. Said I to myself, "This profusion of benevolence exceeds the bounds of moderation. It is painful to feel the weight of such obligations, and feel the total want of power to make any return;" and then throwing myself upon my knees, I poured out my soul in prayer to God and the Blessed Virgin, that they would richly reward him for his bounty. The mail contained besides, three several suits of apparel, exceedingly rich, and adorned with embroidery, a chevesail of pearls, and other jewels necessary for the decoration of a woman of quality.

"I had scarcely returned them to their place, and taken from the gipsire as much

gold as I thought would be necessary for my present use, when I was told, that the ladies were nearly ready to depart. On my taking leave of the prioress, she held out her hand with a purse: "This," said she, "is yours; I have taken from it as much as your board and accommodation requires; the remainder is certainly your due." I refused, however, to accept of it, saying, "Heaven sent it in a time of necessity. Keep it in your hands; and if the body of my dear brother should be found, give orders that it may be buried as becomes a Christian knight; and, in the mean time, let there be masses and dirges performed for the repose of his soul." Having taken our leave of the lady-prioress, and the holy sisterhood, and especially of Agnes and her companion, who had been so kind to me during my illness, I joined the ladies; and, the weather being remarkably fine, we proceeded in an open carriage to Arras, and thence to Calais, where we took shipping for

Dover, and arrived at that port without any interruption.

"I felt an inbred-sensation of pleasure, when I remembered that I was once more standing upon my native land; it was, however, alloyed, by I know not what presages of troubles yet to come. I endeavoured to dissipate these gloomy reflections, by recommending myself to the protection of the blessed Virgin Mary; and the vespers bell calling to prayers, I entered the church, and performed those duties that piety requires, with all the fervency that I was mistress of.

"Having passed the night at Dover, we proceeded to Canterbury, where we determined to stop a day or two, in order to see what was worthy of remark in that ancient city, and particularly to offer our devotions at the holy shrine of St Thomas. We were informed that the archbishop would himself preside at the holy mass upon the ensuing day; we, therefore, went early to the cathe-

dral, and were fortunate enough to obtain a convenient situation to see the whole of the ceremony, which was conducted with much more grandeur and solemnity than I had ever seen before. I could not help reflecting, at this moment, upon the singularity of my present situation. Uncertain of a friendly reception from my own relations, and exposed to a thousand disappointments, my mind was much depressed, and I began to accuse myself for flying from the invitations of calm retirement, which Providence had cast in my way, and plunging myself into the evils and perplexities that are the constant and dangerous attendants upon a life of secular concern. Had a proper opportunity at that moment offered, I should, I doubt not, have embraced it eagerly, and, in the recess of the cloister, have avoided those accumulating evils which have overtaken me. Such were the sentiments of my mind, when the holy mass was concluded; and my young companion, whose

name is Rosalind, recalled me, as it were, to this world, by telling me, they were now going to visit the tomb of the holy martyr. I was exceedingly surprised to find it so rich and magnificent. It absolutely was one flare of gold and jewels; some of which were of great magnitude, and inestimable respecting their value. It was surrounded with burning tapers; and a prodigious multitude of pilgrims and pious votaries encircled the steps, and precluded all possibility of near approach. I, therefore, with my companions, kneeled upon the pavement at a distance, and kissed a golden coffer, which was carried in a kind of procession round the shrine, and contained a piece of the blessed martyr's skull, which was seen through a crystal fixed upon the top for that purpose. My eyes were directed to a tablet that hung over the tomb, and upon which was depicted the saint: He was officiating at the holy altar, surrounded by the cruel murderers, one of which, with

his basilard, was aiming his blow at his head. I wept much at this pitiful sight: "And perhaps," said I to myself, with a sigh, "perhaps, surrounded by such merciless barbarians, my dear unfortunate brother died." In this cathedral we also saw the tomb of Edward Prince of Wales, and over it displayed the shirt of mail that he wore under the cuirass in the fields of Cressy and Poictiers, where he obtained those celebrated victories that will hand down his fame, as a soldier, to the latest annals of posterity.

"From Canterbury we proceeded through Feversham and Sittonburn to Rochester, and thence to Gravesend. The evening closed upon us before we reached the latter place, so that we did not think it prudent to cross the water before the morning; for your lordship well knows, without doubt, that this is a small fishing town upon the banks of the Thames, and opposite to Tilbury Fort, in Essex. We were, however, obliged to put up

with very poor accommodation; but Lady Tracy and her daughter endeavoured, by their politeness and good-humour, to supply these defects. My mind, however, was too much occupied upon the approaching interview with my uncle, to enter into a full participation of their pleasantry. I used, indeed, every endeavour to disguise my sensations; but, I fear, I acquitted myself but awkwardly upon the occasion. After supper Lady Tracy said, "It is too soon for us at present to retire to rest. I will, my dear children—but excuse," added she, "my dear Lady Darcy, the familiarity of my address." I pressed her hand to my lips, and declared, that I thought myself highly honoured by so distinguishing a mark of her friendship. She smiled, and proceeded,—"I will then relate to you a little history of an adventure that happened in this town, the truth of which I vouch for upon my own knowledge."

"The story being concluded, which in reality suspended the poignancy of my reflections, I thanked her for her courtesy, and retired to rest. I slept but little, and rose early. My dear friends were not so watchful; so that I had prepared every thing necessary for their breakfast, before they descended from their chamber. My attention seemed to be particularly pleasing to them, and the compliments of the morning were interchanged with much sincerity.

"Immediately after we had taken our refreshment, we crossed the Thames. A carriage was provided for us at Tilbury, and, in the course of two hours, reached the summit of Langdon hill. Here I was gratified with the most delightful prospect my eyes ever beheld; and Lady Tracy caused the carriage to stop at certain intervals, that her daughter and I might be indulged with a full enjoyment of it; while she, to whom it was familiar, pointed out to us the most material ob-

jects. The country before us formed a beautiful-inclosed valley, bounded, toward the west and south-west, by the distant hills of Highgate, and Hampstead, and the Surry hills, within which wide circuit appeared the great emporium of Europe, the city of London; thence I could trace the beautiful-meanderings of the Thames, and the quantities of shipping passing and repassing I saw the village of Tilbury below, and Gravesend, with the chalk cliffs of Kent, and the country rising like a vast amphitheatre from the marshes. Turning towards the east, we discovered the conjunction of the Thames with the Medway, and the view was terminated by the blue tints of the salt sea, where it opens into the mouth of the British-Channel; and as we passed the corner of a little grove, which shut out the northern part of the prospect, I saw a little hill, superior to any thing that was near it, and upon it a very tall spire, "And that place," said I to the good-lady,

who made me acquainted with the names of the different places that I had seen, "That distant hill with the tall spire, what is it called?" "That," said she, smiling, "is near the place to which you are going; that is Danbury." I know not why, but the word Danbury came so suddenly upon me, that my heart sunk within me; but, soon recovering myself, I said, "And how far may we be from that hill?" "If," replied the lady, "we could gain its summit in a direct line, its distance would not, I think, exceed five or six leagues; but the road, necessary to be passed, is so full of windings, that the circumambulations, which are altogether unavoidable, will make it full ten leagues, saying nothing for the badness of the roads, which, as you yourself will soon witness, will add as much to the fatigue of the journey as the distance." Seeing that I looked very grave, she went on: "But, my dear lady, I hope this report is not the occasion of your thoughtfulness. My

house is perfectly at your service; and I promise you, that we shall not permit you to leave us until you are provided with an equipage proper to appear before the baron; and, if you will accept of my company, I will myself attend you to Gay Bowers, which is in reality a delightful situation." This new instance of Lady Tracy's delicacy and feeling, called forth the warmest expressions of gratitude on my part. "But," added I, "my duty requires me to use all the expedition that lies in my power, to pay the homage that is due to the brother of my father, my guardian, and sole protector." She then grasped my hand, and, with a smile, replied, "We will settle that point to-morrow, and, I doubt not, to your entire satisfaction." I bowed, and was silent. The height of the enclosures had long shut out from us the beauties of the distant prospect, and the road became so exceedingly bad, that the rest of the passage would have been tiresome to the last degree,

had not the sprightliness of the conversation, kept alive by the exertions of the good Lady Tracy, and supported by her lovely daughter, reconciled even the fatigue to me.

"It was nearly sun-set before we reached Bellericay, and the carriage stopped at the lady's residence. It was an old mansion in the middle of the town: it wore, however, the appearance of grandeur, being ornamented in the front with a kind of cloister, having six pointed arches on each side, supported by a double row of clustered pillars; the principal entrance was raised from the ground, and the ascent was made by massy steps of stone. The apartments within, though by no means grandly furnished, were exceedingly neat: the hall was hung with tapestry, and the pavement strewed with clean rushes. She now, with great good-nature, took me by the hand, and bidding me welcome, led me to an inner apartment, where the table was covered for dinner. She intreated me

to be seated; and I was accommodated with a carved stool, and cushion handsomely embroidered. It was quite dark before the dinner was over; and after the desert was removed, Lady Tracy, with her accustomed good-humour, related several diverting-stories, to amuse us until the hour was come for our retirement. The board, indeed, was spread for supper; but the dinner had been so late, that none of us chose to participate in what was set before us. It was then agreed upon between the young lady and her mother, that the former should sleep with me. I readily acquiesced; for there was a vivacity in her manner, that I was much taken with; and besides, the gloominess of my thoughts required the cheerfulness of such a companion to prevent the increase of their influence. The good-lady then summoned the family to prayers, and herself performed the office of chaplain. That duty being over, she took her leave of us; and my fair-com-

-panion, dispensing with the service of her gentlewoman, conducted me herself to the chamber prepared for our reception. Here, as in other parts of the mansion, I found all things extremely neat and convenient. We went to bed, and my companion, being somewhat fatigued with her journey, soon fell asleep; for my part, it was a long time before I could follow her example, and I had not long closed my eyes before both of us were awakend by a sudden cry of horror: the room was illuminated by an unusual glare, and we heard distinctly the dreadful vociferation of *Fire! Fire!* "For Heaven's sake, my dear lady," cried I, "arise; for the house is on fire, and we shall perish in the flames." The fright had such an effect upon her, that she made no attempt to move from her bed. I hastily, however, slipped on my kirtle, which I girt around me, and cast over that my mantle and my wimple, and then throwing her mantle over her shoulders, absolutely dragged her to the door, which I no sooner

opened than the flames burst in upon us: the house was in a blaze, and no hope of escape remained to us by that avenue. Presently a man appeared at the window, mounted upon a ladder which had been placed against the house; "Save yourself, lady," said he; "you can descend this ladder." "Save first," said I "Lady Tracy's daughter." "Where is she?" said the man. "Here," said I, faintly, "upon the bed; for God's sake, come in, and help me to convey her from destruction." Having prevailed upon him to enter the room, I wrapped her in her night mantle, and wound my coat hard over it by way of bandage, and he, with my assistance, conveyed her down the ladder, totally unconscious of what was passing. I followed as quickly as possible, and had not quitted the ladder before the floor of the room gave way. A volume of flames burst from the window; so that one minute's delay had rendered our destruction inevitable. I was terrified by the awful sight, and, jump-

ing from the ladder, missed my footing, and fell upon the green sward, but providentially without receiving any other injury than a slight sprain in my left-ankle. I cannot clearly recollect in what manner I descended the ladder; but from a small contusion which I afterwards found upon my ankle, and a scratch or two upon my left arm, I conceive I must have fallen before I reached the bottom. The effects of the fresh-air had recalled my fair-companion. She began to speak; but the sentences she uttered were so wild and incoherent, that it was evident her senses were much disordered. For my own part, my situation was little preferable. I stood fixed as it were to the ground, alternately looking at her, and at the horrible destruction made by the devouring element; when the young man, who had saved us from destruction, intreated us to quit the garden, where he gently raised the young lady from the green sward, upon which she was seated,

and supporting her on the one side, while I, who much needed assistance myself, did the best I could in her behalf on the other. He conducted us to a neat little cottage, inhabited by his mother, about a quarter of a mile from the town. The good old dame, alarmed by the dreadful disaster, was below in her night-clothes. My companion was perfectly well known to her; and when she learned from her son, that I appeared to be an intimate acquaintance in the family, she made no distinction between us. She cast a faggot upon the embers to prevent our taking cold, and having warmed some elder-wine, prevailed upon us to take a small portion, which she assured us would be for our good. In the mean time, her son was gone back to the fire to give what farther assistance was in his power, and had promised to return as soon as he could learn the event of the dreadful conflagration. The distance of the cottage from Tracy house ensured our safety; but at in-

tervals we could plainly hear the outcries of the people, and the cracking of the timber consuming in the flames, which filled my mind with terror; and I was exceedingly anxious to learn the situation of the good lady, with her other daughter. After my companion had taken a small drop of the elder wine, she seemed for a few moments more composed; but recollecting the danger whence she had escaped, she started up before I was aware, and ran towards the door. It was with much difficulty we could prevail upon her to remain in the house; she insisted on retiring home to save her mother, or to perish with her. We pacified her, by the assurance, that every assistance was exerted in behalf of her mother; that the young man, who had saved our lives, was actually there, and, we doubted not, would return in a few minutes with the joyful tidings of her dear relations welfare. Dame Grey, (for so the good woman was called, under whose friendly roof we were

now sheltered, had brought from her chamber a neat night dress, which being made warm, she prevailed on the young lady to put them on, apologizing for their homeliness, and at the same time assisting her. I now heard a gentle tap at the door, which I opened: here I met our preserver, and from the dejection in his countenance, presaged some disastrous tidings. I therefore placed myself between him and young Lady Tracy, and made a signal with my hand for him to retire. He conceived my meaning, and withdrew. I followed him as gently as possible, and when we had an opportunity of speaking without being overheard by the young lady, he told me, that the event of the fire was inconceivably dreadful; that Lady Tracy, her daughter, and several of the domestics, were buried in the ruins. "Holy Saints," cried I, clasping my hands together, and hardly able to support myself, "how shall I communicate these dreadful tidings to the

daughter, and not occasion her death by the horrid recital!" My absence had not passed unnoticed by the hapless lady; and upon my return she clasped me in her arms, exclaiming, in such doleful accents as pierced me to the soul, "Where is my mother? Where is my sister? Oh, speak to me! Holy Saints, you turn away! The horror of your countenance indicates too plainly that they are lost, and I am"——Here a flood of tears prevented her utterance. She leaned upon my shoulder, and sobbed so bitterly, it would have unnerved the hardest heart, and melted it with sympathetic sorrow. This was a severe trial for me, myself an object of pity. My own griefs rankled in my mind, to which were added the horrors of a friend's despondency; and my spirits were nearly exhausted, when her aunt, who resided at a little distance from the town, having heard of the unhappy fate of her sister and niece, and learning from the good dame's son, whom

she met accidentally, that the eldest daughter had escaped from the flames, rushed into the room, and in agony of sorrow pressed her to her breast. They bathed each others bosoms with heart-rending tears, and so soon as excess of grief allowed her the use of speech, the affectionate relative exclaimed, "Oh, my fortunate child! or shall I rather call you unfortunate in escaping! Thou livest indeed; but it is to deplore the loss of a tender mother, and affectionate sister!" At these words the hapless young lady fainted a second time. As soon as she recovered sufficiently to be removed with safety, her aunt caused her to be carried to a litter, which was waiting at the door for that purpose. To me, who of course was a perfect stranger to her, she returned her thanks, and the good woman of the house, promising that her hospitable assiduities should not be passed over without reward.

"Till this moment, I had not reflected

upon my own share in this dreadful calamity. I had lost the casket containing the wealth which my friend had put into my hands; and except three angels of gold, with a few small pieces of silver which chanced to be in my gipsire, and attached to my girdle, I was totally destitute of money. I then considered the uncouthness of my equipment, with a night mantle over my kirtle, without my corset and under tunic. My wimple, indeed, was very full and long, and perfectly concealed the want of my head adornments; but how, thought I, shall the daughter of Lady Darcy make her appearance before a haughty uncle in such a disguisement. I have no carriage to take me thither, nor servants to attend upon me, nor suitable habiliments to equip myself. I must approach him like an outcast, with no one to introduce me; and perhaps he will spurn me from his door, without listening to my tale of sorrows. These reflections, and the fa-

tigue I had sustained, were too much for my exhausted spirits to support. I sunk under them, and was deprived of sensation for several hours, giving the good woman of the house much trouble, which I was ill provided to repay.

"The next morning I was totally unable to rise, and Dame Grey began to be seriously alarmed on my account. I was well convinced that my stay was inconvenient, and for that reason proposed to hire a horse, with a guide, to conduct me to Gay Bowers; but she, judging much better of my strength than I seemed to do for myself, would not permit me to think of undertaking such a journey that day. "You are going then, my lady, to the Baron Saint Clere." "I am," said I, "indeed; for the Baron of Saint Clere is my uncle." I had no sooner uttered these words than Dame Grey dropped me a low curtsey, and replied, "I wish I had known that before, my dear lady; your lady-

ship may command both me and mine. You have had, in sooth, but a rough welcome: the more's the pity. In good sooth, this house, and the farm we occupy, belong to the Baron of Saint Clere's estate: I and my son be his tenants. If your ladyship thinks it proper, the boy shall go over to Gay Bowers, and inform the baron your uncle of the mischance which has happened; and he will, no doubt, come over himself to fetch you, or send a more suitable equipage than can be provided here." I thanked her for her past favours, which I promised her should not be obliterated from my memory, but positively refused her offer of sending her son to my uncle; adding, "I shall myself, no doubt, be able to undertake the journey to-morrow: I am not personally known to him, because I have been from England the greater part of my life; and I do not wish to apprize him of my arrival in this country, until I can do it in person; for

he is the only near relation I have now living." The good old dame appeared to be perfectly satisfied with my objections, and sent for a leech to visit me, who assured me that I ought not to be removed for a day or two. After I had taken a little refreshment, he sent me a draught, which was to promote rest, and having laid myself down upon the bed, I fell asleep."

CHAPTER V.

Lady Emma's History continued.

"DAME GREY, it seems, acquainted the leech with the relationship I claimed to the baron, and he advised her, by all means, to send her son over to Gay Bowers, without saying any thing farther to me upon the subject; "which," says he, "the baron cannot help taking in good part;" and he himself penned the letter, by which my uncle was informed of my arrival at Bellericay, and of the misfortune which had happened to me in that place. When Francis, the young man who preserved me from the flames, being mounted upon a good horse, set off express for my uncle's mansion, with orders to re-

turn as speedily as possible. I did not awake until it was nearly evening; when, finding myself much revived, I dressed myself in the best manner I could, and went down stairs. Dame Grey was seated at the window, but did not move herself at my approach. I thanked her for the favours she had done me, and repeated my promise, never to forget her good services. To this she coolly replied, without turning her head towards me, "Why, as to that matter, my lady, as you are pleased to call yourself, it may be so. You are welcome to all that I have done, 'tis true; but, at the same time, one does not always know who one has to deal with, and charity begins at home." I was much astonished at this sudden alteration in her behaviour, and begged to know if I had unwittingly given her any cause of offence. "I cannot say so," replied she; "but I find that all is not gold which glitters,—he judges often falsely, who judges from the

outside only." I could not by any means trace out the consistency of these sarcastic saws, nor divine how they could be justly applied to myself; yet the cool indifference manifested by her behaviour, and the dry manner in which they were spoken, plainly precluded any other explication; and therefore I begged of her to speak out with plainness and sincerity. "That letter, I am told," said she, "will spare me the trouble; no doubt, you are a scholar, and can read it." She then held out a folded paper superscribed, and which had been sealed, but was now broken open. I cast my eyes partly over the contents, without reading them; and when I saw for the signature the name of Gaston de Saint Clere, I trembled, and felt the blood recoil from my cheeks. The old dame took these emotions for positive proofs of my guilt, and said, with a sarcastic sneer, "Adad, my fine young mistress, but now your wings will be clipped, I trow." Not

heeding her apostrophe, I read the epistle, which was couched in these words :—

"DAME GREY,

"If I did not conceive, that your credulity had subjected you to the imposition of an artful deceiver, I should suspect that you had leagued with her to cheat me. However, as a proof of your sincerity, I expect you will instantly, upon the receipt of these lines, turn her out of your doors; and at the same time, inform the cozening quean from me, that if I should hear any more about her, I will consign her ladyship to the care of the keeper of Chelmsford prison, who is the proper warder for such self-created title bearers. For your own satisfaction, I can assure you, that I have authentic documents to prove the death of my real cousin in Flanders two years back. If I am not obeyed, I shall, without hesitation, send a neighbour of mine to take possession of the farm you hold from me;

therefore, I advise you not to make an enemy of your friend,

GASTON SAINT CLERE."

"The language contained in this epistle was shocking to humanity; but I was equally surprised that my arrival at Bellericay should have been known to Gaston Saint Clere, or that he should have written instead of his father the baron. Dame Grey observed my perplexity, and judging, from my silence, that I had nothing to say in my own defence, was confirmed in the opinion she had formed of my duplicity; and therefore addressed me in the following terms:—"I am very sorry, my pretty damsel, that you should have forfeited every just title to respect, and taken upon yourself a character which does not belong to you. You see that I am under the necessity of fulfilling my landlord the baron's order." She was proceeding in her speech, when I interrupted her, saying, "Your land-

lord! and Gaston de Saint Clere! and not from the baron? The baron's name is Eustace." "By my fay," said she, "my fine young lady, you must learn your story better another time: Eustace de Saint Clere has been dead a full twelvemonth come latter Lammas; and, poor gentleman, he had been confined to his room many months before; and our lord Gaston succeeded to his estates and titles.—But to the purpose; I am grieved to turn you from my doors, but I have no alternative: to retain you is to ruin myself; for the baron never threatens, but he performs. I can only add, that you are welcome to what has been done.—Go, in God's name, and, if my advice may be worth your listening to, take heed how you offend the baron again; for in his justice he never looks at mercy." To this I answered, "Your suspicions do not excite my surprise; they naturally arise from the appearance of the circumstances, and justify your conduct: but, as I have truth

and justice on my side, far other thoughts than those imposed by guilt occupy my mind. I again thank you for the kindness I have received at your hands, and on no account will be farther burthensome. The dreadful calamity of last night has robbed me of all my money, excepting these few pieces of gold; take them, and, believe me, I am sincerely sorry I have it not in my power to reward you more amply." So saying, I reached my hand with the money towards her; but, rising hastily, she gently put my hand aside, saying, "No; by the holy rood, I will not touch one single cross." Here her son Francis entered the room, and I requested him to accept of the gold, as a token of my gratitude, but not as a reward in any degree adequate to the important services he had rendered me. But the good dame straightly interfered, saying, "The knave, I trust, knows better than to take it. Mercy upon us, we be not hard-hearted; and besides, we should

add to your distressful situation: but know," added she, "there is something so soft and so innocent in your deportment, that I will not rigidly enforce the harsh command of my master. It is late; you are a stranger here, and know not where to go. You shall sleep here this night, and to-morrow, farewell; and may the blessed Mary, the Mother of God, defend you." This friendly offer I positively refused, being determined, that she should not incur the baron's displeasure upon my account; but begged permission for Francis to take me to some inn in the town, where I might be accommodated with a room to myself. My request was rudely complied with; and after I had taken leave of Dame Grey, her son conducted me to a small tavern at the entrance of the town, which was kept by a widow, an acquaintance of theirs; and after having recommended me warmly to the care of the hostess, he wished me good-speed, and withdrew. I was

then lighted to my bed-room, and having dismissed the chambermaid with a strict charge not to permit me to be disturbed, I locked the door and threw myself upon the bed, and bathed the pillow with a flood of tears. Now, all the misery of my present situation flowed upon my labouring mind, and a thousand perplexing apprehensions prevailed in succession. I saw myself a suspected stranger in my own country, overwhelmed in poverty and disgrace; deserted by every one about me, and spurned from the hearth of the only relation I could apply to, and from whom I had a right to expect protection. I now recollected, with horror, that the title deeds of my mother's jointure, and the letters which I had received from my benevolent benefactor in Beaumont, were consumed in the flames; for I had sewed them between the linings of my bonnet for safety's sake. I had, therefore, no voucher to bring forward in proof that I really was

the daughter of Lady Darcy; and perhaps, said I, this hard-hearted relation will carry his threats into execution, and I may in reality be thrown into a prison to perish there. How dare I, then, commit my appeal to this cruel relation? and yet, I have no means of subsistence, but what depends upon him; I have no garment to cover me, saving those upon my back, and they are strangely suited to each other; and the small portion of coin which is remaining, will presently be expended. While I was thus ruminating upon the miseries which surrounded me, I heard a gentle rap at my door: I raised my head from my pillow, and listened with attention, when I heard the rapping repeated. I then rose from my bed, and going to the door, enquired if any one was there. A female voice replied, "It is I;" I thought I recognized the voice of my uncle's tenant. I opened the door, and found I was not deceived. She intreated to speak a word or two with me;

upon which, I desired her to walk in, and pointed to a stool with a cushion, while I seated myself upon the side of the bed.

"I hope you will pardon my intrusion," said she, "and the more particularly, as I was told below that you had given orders not to be disturbed; but, in very truth, I have been exceedingly uneasy in my mind ever since you left my poor dwelling. Mercy on me! I fear I was too hasty, and I have chid myself a thousand times for showing you the naughty letter." "Indeed then, my good dame," said I, sighing, "you have done your self much wrong. You have acted very properly; every prudent person, in like circumstances, would have done the same. You have every reason to suspect me to be an impostor: I have no means at present to clear up my character; but, even if I had, it would be dangerous for you to countenance me, while I am discountenanced by my nearest relation, and that relation your landlord.—In-

deed, my dear dame," added I, rising, and taking her by the hand, " I have much to thank you for, but nothing to lay to your charge." She grasped my hand, while the tears stood in her eyes; and, looking me earnestly in the face, exclaimed, " Oh, blessed queen of heaven! this innocent is wronged.—I am, 'tis true, a poor silly woman; yet I can see something in your countenance that speaks for itself.—Well, but to my business: Though I may not help thee openly, I can, I trow, in secret, do thee some service. You must know, that my husband's sister was nurse to the family at Foleshunt-Darcy, and I have heard her speak of you, if it was you she nursed"—" And not of my brother," said I, hastily; " for I have heard my honoured mother say, that one nurse attended upon us both."—" I have heard her mention the young lord also," said the dame. " And where is this good woman?" added I: " Where does she live? Can I see her? Oh, tell me, I beseech you."

" One moment's patience, my dear lady, and I will tell you. This self-same gossip resides at Great Baddow, in the way to Danbery, and, perchance, it will be your wish to see her." " See her, my dear friend!" cried I;— I grasped her hand, and pressing it to my lips in an extacy of joy—" You are my good angel! You have, in a few words, resuscitated my dying hope, and mitigated the poison of my sorrow.—See her! yes, certainly, this moment, if possible. Her testimony will be equal in strength to the documents I brought from Flanders, and which were consumed in the flames. There are some circumstances impressed upon my mind, which I have learned from my mother, which cannot fail of proof, if she was in reality our nurse." " Enough, enough," said the old dame; " She was your nurse; and I have heard her say so."—I hastily replied, " Then I am happy; I——Oh, let me see her before I sleep!" " That cannot be, my dear lady,"

answered the dame; "for, though the distance is little more than two leagues, it is now late, the night is dark, and the road is extremely bad. It will be impossible to travel it without imminent danger; to-morrow—" "To-morrow, then, I will see her," answered I; "her evidence will, I doubt not, convince my uncle, and restore me to my rights."

"My good benefactor was perfectly convinced that I was no impostor, and entreated me to return with her to the cottage; that, however, I positively refused; for whatever may happen," said I, "it will be imprudent for you to give offence to the baron, by disobeying his commands." She then begged me to take some refreshment; and, before I could prevent her, positively ordered it. I ate part of a chicken, and drank a small cup of warm claret, made rich with spices; and then we consulted together, respecting the proper method of prosecuting the business of

the following day! It was first proposed, that Francis should bring his aunt from Baddow; but it occurred to me, that we should thereby occasion an unnecessary delay, and that it would be better for me to go to Baddow myself, and take the nurse with me to Gay Bowers, without giving the baron the least previous notice. This step was agreed to; and the good dame promised, that Francis should wait upon me early in the morning, with a safe little hobby for me to ride, and himself to conduct me to Baddow: "And if, my dear young lady," said she, "things should fall out unfavourably, speak not of him, nor of me either, but as one who turned you from my doors."

"It was now late, and my benefactor advised me to go to bed, saying, she would sit by the bed-side all night to keep me company; and it was with much difficulty I could prevail upon her, to use her own term, to be "said, nay." After her departure I fastened

the door; and, having made my evening orisons, laid myself upon the bed, but without pulling off my clothes. My mind was greatly tranquillized by the prospect of success; for I doubted not but the evidence of the nurse would quiet all the scruples which had arisen in the mind of the baron, and compel him to acknowledge me; and I anxiously wished for the return of day.

"In the midst of these cogitations, sleep stole upon me unawares; and I was not awakened, until by a gentle knock at the door, which announced the arrival of my benefactress. She held a parcel in her hand, which contained a pair of new hose of sey, a pair of cordovan shoes, that laced upon the instep, and a new kirtle of Samite, with a boddice belonging to the same. "These," says she, "you must borrow of me." Seeing that I appeared surprised at the offer, she went on: "And, indeed, I must not be refused, for I know you cannot possibly do

without them. No doubt, my lady," added she, "you will soon change them for others more suitable to your rank, and then you will send them back." She then insisted upon assisting me in putting them on; and I besought her to accept of my night-mantle, which was very rich and elegantly embroidered; but she would not accede to any such proposal, saying, the mantle was absolutely necessary for my comfort, and that she had not bought one requisite to be returned by another equally needful.

"I now partook of some refreshment which she had ordered; and, when I called for the hostler's compt, I was informed that the whole was discharged. This new obligation, which my benefactress had conferred upon me, brought the tears into my eyes. I grasped her hand, and implored the holy saints to bless and protect her and her son, who came with the horses. I was mounted upon that

which had been provided for me; and, having again expressed my gratitude to the good dame, I parted from her, and I much fear to meet no more."

CHAPTER VI.

Lady Emma's History continued.—Her Interview with her Cousin.

"FRANCIS, by his mother's orders, took me down a bye-lane, by the back of the town; because she justly judged, that the sight of the mouldering ruins of Tracy-house would recal to my recollection the dreadful horrors of the night, and, by affecting my spirits very powerfully, add much to the wearisomeness of my journey.

"I learned from my guide, that the conflagration made its first appearance in Lady Tracy's bed-chamber, and burnt with such rapidity, that it was nearly consumed before the flames had communicated themselves to the

other parts of the dwelling; so that it was not possible to render the unfortunate lady and her daughter the least assistance. Several of the female servants, who slept in the adjoining apartments, were missing; and others, who had escaped, were scorched in a terrible manner. It was impossible to ascertain from what cause the calamity originated; but various conjectures, of course, were substituted in the place of positive information.—But I am wandering from the subject; and, therefore, I will here close my observations upon this melancholy catastrophe.

"We reached Baddow at the third hour, when the matin's-bell was ringing; and Francis conducted me immediately to the residence of his aunt, who fortunately happened to be at home. She desired her nephew to show me into the parlour, and followed presently herself. She was rather short in stature, and somewhat inclined to be corpulent; but exceedingly neat and cleanly, both

in her dress and person. She was turned of sixty, but her countenance was a mixture of health and good-humour. "My nephew tells me," said she, "that your ladyship would speak with me." "I have a question or two," said I, "which you will greatly oblige me by answering circumstantially; because your answers are likely to be of much importance to me." She bowed her head in token of compliance; and I enquired, if she was the person who had usually attended Lady Darcy as a nurse? To which she readily answered, "Yes, my good lady, I am indeed. I nursed all madam's children; and, woe the while! I lost a kind benefactress, when her honour, with her dear little babes, went into foreign parts.—Mercy 'pon us, young lady, times are mainly changed since then! That noble family is no more; and his honour at Gay Bowers has neither chick nor child; so that, with him, another honourable title falls to the ground. His honour is hugely rich; but,

what then! there is many a yeoman in this village that keeps a much warmer house than he;—but poor folks should hear, see, and say nothing." "Perhaps," answered I, smiling at her loquacity, "it may, at times, be prudent for them so to do;—but I think Lady Darcy had but two children when she went abroad." "No more, my good lady. Three sweet babes died in their nonage, and my lord and madam began to think, they should not have any of their children to live; but there came the young Lord Henry, a charming baby. I can assure you, he was as strong as a horse at six weeks old: He was the very simile of the baron, his father; had the same look with his eyes; and I warrant, in like manner, he would stamp with his little foot, when he was angry.—Never were two peas more like, than young Lord Henry and his honour the baron."

"The mention the nurse made of my dear unfortunate brother brought a flood of tears

into my eyes: the affection with which she spoke of him made me love her. Seeing me weep, she was surprised, and, with much appearance of solicitude, said, "Did you know the young lord?" To which I answered, "Yes; I knew him well.—But do you recollect the other child?" "Recollect her!" cried she, hastily. "God forgive me, I should sooner forget my own son than that sweet baby! Tom was weaned that I might give my dear Lady Emma the breast. She was the sweetest lamb, and so fond of her poor nurse. I warrant me cried a whole week when I parted with her: the dear little lady cried to see me cry, and held out its arms to come to me again. O, 'twas a perilous parting! Lady Darcy obliged me to quit the room; for there was no standing its weeping while I remained there: but," added she, shaking her head, and wiping away the tears which were starting from her eyes, "old Gaunt, the Baron of Saint Clere's steward,

who stopped here on his way to Chelmsford market on Friday last, informed me, that his lordship had received letters from beyond sea, announcing the death of that dear young lady. It almost broke my heart to hear on't." "But supposing," said I, "that this report should be without foundation,—supposing the lady now living and in England, could you, after so long an absence, together with the great alteration which takes place in the features of an infant as it approaches to womanhood,—could you, I say, at this time recognize your nursling, and distinguish her from another person?" "Yes, marry, and, in good sooth, I can," said she. "I cannot be deceived: Heaven knows I cannot, to my sorrow; for I was innocently the occasion of it: she has a scar I am confident she will carry with her to the grave; and by that scar I can distinguish her from a thousand, if other proof be not sufficient." I was astonished at this part of the nurse's discourse; for I cer-

tainly did not know I had ever received any wound that had left a scar behind it: and I began to think she had attributed to me some accident that might have befallen one of my sisters; and therefore I requested her to tell me if she should know her, supposing that proof to be wanting. "In sooth, I think so," said she. Upon this I removed my veil, and threw back the wimple, so that my face was entirely uncovered, saying at the same time, "Suppose now that I should declare myself to be the daughter of the baron."——She surveyed me earnestly.—I paused, that I might not give her any interruption. She came nearer to me, and after looking some time, exclaimed, "Saint Bridget protect me! they are the very features of my Lady Darcy—the very arch of her eyebrow—the nose—the mouth—her shape too, and the fall of the shoulders—the very model of my lady." Here she remained silent, still viewing me anxiously, and I went

on:—"Suppose that I should say, on the morning I was committed to your care, a wode-woman put into your hands a paper for a small piece of silver."—"By the mass, I well remember that naughty paper," said she, interrupting me, "my lady was main angry."—"And I will tell thee," continued I, "the cause of her anger. The woman told you it contained an abstract of the fortune which should befal the infant."—"O, 'tis as true as the Primer!" quoth she.—"Lady Darcy," added I, "considered it as idle nonsense; and because it forboded much evil to the child, took it from thee under pretence of burning it, which, however, she did not perform. I have heard her repeat it frequently, and its contents are these:—

In foreign climes yfrowns thy fate,
Here woe and wayment thee await,
    Forlorn must thou be;
Nor can thy wayward fortune mend
Till death gives back a stoleworth friend,
    To break the chains of cark, and set thee free."

"In truth," said she, "it was something like it. I wot me well it was a doleful threatening. Heaven preserve you, my dear young lady; for surely you resemble my honoured mistress. May I hope—that smile bids me hope;—for the sake of Heaven, permit me to remove your wimple; I will not discompose it worth-mentioning." I bowed down my head to accommodate her the better: she turned back the folding from my left ear, and drew down the gorget beneath it, her hands trembling from the agitation she was in; when on a sudden she gave a loud shriek, clasped her hands together, and exclaimed, "It is indeed my dear child! It is the daughter of Lady Darcy, her own dear self!" So saying, she burst into tears, fell upon her knees before me, kissed my hands, and threw her arms about me, as though she was afraid I should vanish from her. It was a long time before I could pacify her. She repeated the ave-marie several times, and gave thanks to

almost every saint in the Litany, because they had permitted her to see me once more; and uttered a thousand tender expressions, which, though clothed in the garb of rusticity, evinced the warm effusions of her heart. Her kindness greatly affected me, and I could not help weeping in concert with her. So soon as these transports had subsided, I informed her of the letter which her sister had sent to Gay Bowers, and the answer my cousin had returned her. She shook her head, and was going to speak, but I prevented her by going on.—" A false report," said I, " of my death, it appears, has been propagated abroad, which, by some means or another, has reached the baron's ears; and this will easily account for his angry letter. It remains for me to do away every prejudice, and establish my pretensions with him beyond the reach of doubt. For this reason, I think it will be highly proper for you to accompany me to Gay Bowers, if you will so

far oblige me." "Oblige you, my dear young mistress!" said the nurse; "Ay, forsooth, I would go to Pagan-land and back again to do you service." I grasped her hand, and, with a smile, replied, "My dear nurse, I hope I shall not need so arduous a proof of your affection; but it will be necessary for us to proceed without delay to my uncle's residence, and, if you please, I will instantly bespeak post horses for the purpose." To this she also assented; and, having arranged a few domestic concerns, was presently prepared for the journey. For the accommodation of her husband when he returned from his labour, she left the key of the house with her next door neighbour. I would by no means permit Francis to go any further with me, but sent him back with my best thanks to his mother; desiring him, at the same time, to inform her, that her sister was perfectly satisfied.

"It was somewhat turned of noon when we arrived at Gay Bowers, where I was surprised by the sight of a stately manor running hastily to ruins. The grass was growing upon the top of the walls, and part of them were already fallen into the surrounding moat. The outer court wore the appearance of the entrance to a desolated cavern, rather than the approach to the dwelling of a person of wealth. The casements of the house were most of them broken, and in many places patched with boards, to supply want of glass. In short, every part of the edifice indicated the miserable disposition of its owner. The steward, who attended in the hall, and acted also in the place of a porter, was habited in the fashion of the last century. The embroidery upon his tunic, and the badge of the Saint Cleres, which was wrought upon the front, appeared so imperfectly, that it could not readily be distinguished; and the tunic itself, which formerly had been

blue, was so tattered and patched, and covered with grease, that the pristine colour was nearly obliterated. His person was as remarkable as his dress; a tall, meagre figure, with a few locks of hair upon the back part of his head, and those perfectly white; his visage was long, his eyes sunk deeply into the sockets, and his cheek-bones high and prominent. I thought, in sooth, he resembled an inhabitant of the charnel house, rather than an animated being. With a low and hollow voice, affecting at the same time great solemnity, he enquired who I was, and what brought me thither. I told him it was my wish to speak with the Baron Saint Clere upon some business of great importance. He then desired me to wait in the hall, and stalked away with much gravity through a passage which led to the interior part of the mansion, and took no notice of my companion, who seemed somewhat hurt upon the occasion, and said, " This walking

atomy, I trow, does not remember me here; but, in good sooth, he knows me passing well, when he takes a horn of ale or two with me at Baddow; aye, and finds my house as readily as my pullets find their roosts." I could not help smiling at the good dame's observation, but made no reply.

"During the absence of the steward, which was somewhat prolonged, I cast my eyes over the furniture of the hall; and here an equal appearance of wretchedness displayed itself, with that so strikingly obvious upon the outside of the mansion. The hangings of stately tapestry were torn in an hundred places, and through the lacerations exposed the naked walls. The suits of armour, which had anciently belonged to the heroes of the family of Saint Clere, celebrated for their valour in the Holy Wars, were covered with dust, and falling away piece-meal from their stands. The seat of state was stripped of all its ornaments; the hawks perches were broken down;

and cobwebs concealed the carvings, with other rich embellishments of the roof, from the eye of the spectator. Here, hospitality, as I have heard my mother say, delighted once to dwell; but here, I found no vestige of her footsteps.

"The steward returned, and we were formally ushered to the presence of the lord of this large ruin. I found him to be a diminutive man, crooked in his person, and ill-favoured. His dark brows hung over his eyes like pent-houses; but his eyes themselves were sharp and piercing. He was seated at a table, and several writings lay before him. As we approached, he cast his eyes upon me, and surveyed me with so much earnestness, that he put me to the blush. At length, he addressed me with a shrill tone of voice, saying, "Well, woman, and what is your will with me?" "Sir," said I, "is your name Gaston de Saint Clere?" "That is my name," answered he; "and what of that?" "Had

you not once a sister?" To this question he replied in the affirmative, and I went on:—"That sister was married to John, Lord Darcy"——"Hold," cried he, "I shall not answer thee any farther." He then examined some folded papers, which were scattered upon the table, and having selected one, he opened it, saying, "Yes, this is it:" and then, surveying me a second time with a contemptuous air, he said, "You wrote me, I think, from Bellericay." I assured him I did not. "Well then," added he, pettishly, "the letter was written at your desire." This I also denied. "Do you mean to say then," quoth he, "that you are not acquainted with the contents of that letter?" To this I answered, "When it was sent I did not know them, nor do I now but imperfectly." "Perhaps, then," added he, "you are equally ignorant respecting the answer I returned." "No, sir, I saw the cruel answer; and in defiance of the threatenings it contained, I am come

to claim my right,—a wretched female orphan's right. That answer thrust me from the cottage where humanity had given me entrance; and last night saw the defenceless daughter of Anna de Saint Clere, by your command, cast out from the residence of your dependant." He, nothing moved, retorted with a sarcastic grin, "I'll tell thee what, my good daughter of Anna de Saint Clere, if you do not presently follow the advice contained in that same letter"—"Well, what then?" cried I, hastily interrupting him. "Why then," continued he, "I shall send for the constable of this district, and put these threats in execution." I had no conception, previous to this interview, that I should have been courageous enough to support such a debasing conversation; but this last insult, instead of depressing my spirits, roused all my soul within me. "Look you, sir," said I, "the heir of the Darcies stands before you—she claims your protection—

nature demands it from you—humanity commands it—and I will assert my right; for let me tell you, sir, there is but one way for you to secure yourself, and shut out my complaints." "And what is that?" cried he, eagerly. "To murder me."—He started back. —"That done, perhaps," continued I, "it may be proper to silence this witness in my favour." Here I beckoned the nurse to come forward, and presented her to him. She had not much attracted his notice: but upon her approach, he presently recognized her features; for she was well known in the family. He appeared confused at the sight of her, and, striking his hand upon the table, exclaimed, "What, in the devil's name, brings you here? Oh, I perceive now, this is a plot; a combination!" "I beseech your honour," said the good dame, "not to have such hard thoughts of me; I be an honest woman, and have served in this house, and in the noble house at Foleshunt Darcy, ever since I was a

child; and your honour's mother, God send her soul! was main fond of me, and on the very day this young lady, her grand-daughter, was born, gave to me a fine rosary of coral-beads gauded with silver; and ten months—let me see—yes, it was ten months and one day, I remember now, upon the eve of the holy Saint Michael"——"Curse upon your prolixity!" cried he, with much impatience, "What is to be the upshot of all this caterwauling?" "I be telling your honour, so be it your honour will hear me.—Well, upon the eve of the festival, I went to hear holy mass: this dear little infant was then teething, and I warrant it was so cross, for its precious gums were mainly swelled, and not having the coral at hand, I took the cross at the end of the rosary to nib them withal; and seeing it was pleased with the gauds, I counted them over and over to pacify it: at last, it grasped the cross in its little hand, and flourishing it about, as infants are wont to do with their

playthings, I warrant me it struck the joint at the top, which was as sharp as a thwittle's point, into the skin behind its left ear, and laid the bone bare the length of my thumb joint. I was beside my wits to see how it bled, and dared not for the world say a word to madam. The house-leech closed up the wound, and it was healed, and no one but he and I knew any thing of the matter; but the scar remained, and there it remains to this blessed day." "How long was this ago?" said he; "answer me without hesitation." She readily replied, "Why, your honour, it will be just nineteen years come the time." "Your memory is good," quoth he, musing. "O, your honour, I was so aghast, that I shall remember it to my dying day! the dear little innocent did so pule and cry, I warrant it nearly broke my heart." "I would," said he, angrily, "it had broken your neck." "Not so, your honour," quoth the dame; "for, as I hope for mercy, it was unwittingly done,

in sooth it was: and on that very day se'ennight, my husband's best cow, Wide Horns, died, and poor Tom fell into the horse-pond." "And what the devil has all this to do with the matter?" cried he. "Why, your honour," continued she, "Tom was then thirteen months old, and at Martlemas-tide next he will be"——"Hold thy prating," said he, interrupting her; "the noise of a rookery, or the chattering of pyes, is music compared with thy impertinence." To this she replied, "I was only doing my duty, your honour; and, by my troth, I weened, that it would do you pleasure to hear that I could prove my lady to be no counterfeit." The conclusion of the good dame's discourse I observed had a striking effect upon the baron's countenance, which was drawn out to a greater length than before; and clapping his hands upon his forehead, he seemed to be immersed for a few moments in deep reflection, when recovering himself, he again scrutinized my per-

son; and at last, endeavouring to mould his features into a smile, which at best became them badly, he addressed himself to me in a mild tone of voice, saying, "If, in good sooth, you be my relation, and the heir of the Darcy family, you have undoubtedly a claim upon me for protection. From what this woman has said, I am inclined to hope you have not dealt falsely with me. You possess, no doubt, the title-deeds of your mother's dowry: they must be produced to substantiate your claims to these estates." Here he paused; and I, knowing they had been consumed in the horrid conflagration at Bellericay, was at a loss how to frame my answer. I thought it not prudent to acquaint him at this time with that unfortunate circumstance, and I did not see how I could, consistent with the truth, evade the question. After some little hesitation, I replied, "I have not these documents now with me, and indeed some other vouchers may be neces-

sary, which must be obtained from Flanders." "From Flanders!" cried he. "By the shrine of Saint Thomas, the wench has lost her wits! Are you aware of the sums of money which must be expended to send messengers to Flanders? Have you reckoned the time it will take them in going and coming? Gads my life, we may be dead and in our graves before they return, or what is more likely, ruined by litigious law-suits, and judgment obtained prior to the arrival of our justification. If you have left these parchments behind you in Flanders, you have, I fear, insured your ruin." "You much surprise me, sir, by the mention you make of law proceedings," said I. "The estates belonging to my mother's jointure are in your management,—you have a power assigned to you for receipt of the rents, and no one to account with but myself; for I am unfortunately the only claimant: whence then can arise this formidable judgment you have been speak-

ing of? Surely a course of law cannot be requisite to decide upon what is right between your lordship and myself." To this he replied, "I shall take an early opportunity of explaining this matter to you; and God forbid that the child of my father's sister should suffer wrong, even of a farthing!" He then desired me to be seated, for I had been standing all the time, and ordered the nurse to withdraw, which she readily did, and seemed overjoyed that he had owned me as his relation.

"When we were by ourselves, he entered into a more general conversation with me: his manner, however, was still reserved, and his questions, which were exceedingly multifarious, resembled those of an inquisitor, rather than such as one might have expected from a relation, and plainly proved, that his heart was very little interested in my behalf. The answers I returned to him respecting our family, and their connections, were replete

with variety of incidental circumstances, many of which he had been well acquainted with, and which, from the privacy of their nature, could not have been well known but to one of the family. In that he could not find the least foundation for controversy, and therefore seemed to be perfectly satisfied that I was no impostor. I gave him a detail of my misfortunes; and at the time I related to him the dreadful occurrence respecting my brother's murder, he even affected to weep; and when I came to the dreadful calamity which so lately had befallen me at Bellericay, he held out his hand, and besought me for pity's sake to spare his feelings, and drop for the present a narrative so exceedingly distressing. He then proceeded to express much sorrow for having himself unwittingly added to my distress; and to convince me that he was not so blameable as I might have conceived him to be, he put into my hands a letter in the hand-writing of my dear friend

at Beaumont, which he assured me he had recently received from Flanders, and in it was contained a short but formal account of my death.

"Nothing could exceed my astonishment at the sight of this letter. He had promised to me, indeed, that he would communicate to my uncle an account of my brother's murder; and yet, extraordinary as it may appear, my brother was not mentioned in it. "Heavens, is it possible," said I to myself, "that so much benevolence, and so much falsehood, could at once inhabit the same bosom!" I was equally at a loss to conceive, what purpose the circulation of such an idle untruth could answer, or what motive stimulated him to promulgate the same. My cousin readily perceived my agitation, for I could not conceal it, and said, "Having seen this epistle, you will cease, perhaps, to wonder at my caution. My protection undoubtedly is due to the real heir of the Darcies; but it is, on

the other hand, my duty to punish an impostor." I bowed my head, and told him, it was the demand of justice. He then rang a hand-bell that stood upon the table, and the steward appeared. He enquired if dinner was ready, and was told, it was that moment served up. "Well, cousin," said he, "you will find but poor fare with me. The times are very hard; the levies, for the support of the war, are enormous; and money so difficult to get at, that I am forced to retrench, and live hard;—but such as I have, you are welcome to." I curtseyed, and thanked him; when, taking me by the hand, he led me into a dining-parlour, preceded by the steward, who ushered us to our places.

"This room, which formerly had been the room of state, was spacious and lofty; having a large window at the end, embellished with beautiful painted glass, some remnants of which appeared, but withal so mutilated and misplaced, that none of the subjects could be

traced with any degree of certainty. The hangings were of crimson bandkin, richly embroidered, but covered with dust, and in many places broken from their fastenings, exposed the walls, and afforded asylums without number for the spiders. The stools and tressels were elegantly covered, and had been gilt; but most of them were broken, and the velvet cushions belonging to them so torn, that the bombast, with which they were stuffed, appeared on the outside, and, in several instances, hung down nearly to the floor. In the middle of this extensive parlour stood a small table, covered with a tattered carpet, and a diaper over it; which, I presume, from its threadbare state, had been in the family long before the present owner of the mansion was born. There were two covers upon the table; under the one was a small piece of lean mutton, and under the other a large dish full of oatmeal pottage. The middle of the table was decorated with a little platter,

containing some withered sallad, and near it was placed the remnant of a loaf of barley-bread.

"My cousin kept no chaplain to give us the benedicite, nor carver to perform the honours of the table; he therefore took upon himself the performance of both offices. He helped me to a portion of the pottage; and, at the same time, made a long panegyric upon the wholesomeness of such kind of food. I could only eat a few spoonfuls, and refused to taste the mutton. "Alas, my dear cousin," said he, shaking his head, "I plainly perceive that my poor table will not satisfy your better taste; you have been used to much higher living, and cannot dine without dainties.—Your father, coz, I have been told, used to keep state, disdaining to eat of common meats:—Twenty pounds, I warrant, expended for one course. Fish must be had, of the most costly kind; strange birds, and foreign fowls, the more expensive the better; to

say nothing of venison and red deer, with pasties, and rich sauces: such luxuries bred diseases, and lost him many of his fair estates.—Gad wot, he was to blame." Here I interrupted him, "Sir, he was my father,"— "Well, well," said he, "I have done:—he is dead, God rest his soul! but you and I have much reason to blame him." "In truth, I know not wherein," answered I; "he was a kind and tender parent." "Why, there it is," replied my cousin, eagerly; "for that very tenderness, and bringing you up with high notions, ill proportioned to the slender means which you have to support yourself. The wealth, which should have supported you, he squandered away in riot and luxury." "I know not," said I, "of the extravagance you talk of. My father, sir, loved hospitality; my mother superintended the provision for the family; and though they lived, in some degree, as became the descendants of the Darcies and the St-

Cleres, it was done without superfluity on the one hand, or parsimony on the other." "Perhaps," retorted he, "by and bye, you may find, I have not mis-stated this matter. I see you will find it a hard case to fare as I do; and yet, heaven knows! with all my parsimony, I find it difficult to supply my table as you see it." "You surprise me, sir," said I. "No doubt," answered he; "but, alas! I have stood in the gap on your mother's account; and so, to our mutual loss, has my father before me; for he loved your mother, and went greater lengths for her than prudence warranted. The estates, committed to our management, were mortgaged so heavily, that large remittances have been made from our own purses; besides repairs, and various other drawbacks, by which they are entirely eaten up.—For my part, I am ready to do all that lies in my power; but it is hard that the whole of the burden should fall upon my shoulders." "Surely, sir," said I, "my mo-

-ther's jointure, which descends to me, will prevent my being dependant upon any one." "I fear," answered he, drawing his hand over his chin, "you are not well informed upon this point;—but it shall be discussed hereafter." At this moment the entrance of the steward put an end to the discourse. My cousin desired him to remove the meat and the pottage, and to put the fruit upon the table, which consisted of three or four roasted crab apples, some sweetings, and half a dozen horse-plumbs. By way of confectionary, a few carraways were brought in a saucer, with a spoonful or two of sharp capers, and a morsel of Suffolk cheese. Our drink was sour ale, and weak metheglin. He made several clumsy excuses for the poverty of his desert, and repeated his fears, that I should think it hard to fare as he did; and launched out afresh in praise of economy, and condemnation of the luxury to which I had been accustomed. In short, I was disgusted with

my entertainment; and, my heart being full, I burst into tears. "What the devil ails thee now!" cried he, pretending to be amazed. I begged of him to permit me to retire; alleging, consistent with truth, that I was unwell. He then rang the bell, and dispatched the steward to call Urseley, who presently appeared, and was ordered to attend me to my chamber. "I mean," said he, "the bedroom, which my cousin is to have to herself." He then took me by the hand, telling me, I might rely upon him. I thanked him for his promise, and withdrew.

"My guide conducted me through the great hall, where, mounting a noble flight of stairs, which faced the entrance, we came to a long gallery, and passing by the doors of several other chambers, we came to mine, situated at the end, and apparently the largest of them all. I entreated the good dame to send the nurse to me. The moment she retired I gave indulgence to my anxiety; and

my dear friend found me in a flood of tears, which greatly alarmed her. The moment I had sufficiently recovered myself, I made her acquainted with the nature of the conversation that had passed between the baron and myself. "Ah, my good lady," said she, "I fear me, foul doings will be done. Might often overcomes right:—his worship is main fond of money; and, Gad's my life! I fear he means not fairly." "Let us not prejudge him, my dear nurse," answered I; "perhaps, as he says, the estates may be enthralled, and require time to set them clear:—But, what I chiefly mean to consult you upon is this—He speaks of my being dependant, and, by that word, I think he clearly means, a burthen upon him; and, in truth, so far as I can judge from what I have seen, my living under his roof will not be tolerable, especially for any length of time. A slender allowance will satisfy me; and if you would enquire me out a proper situation in some religious house,

I would make my asylum with the holy sisterhood. My cousin," added I, "will probably propose the same thing to me; but, perhaps, he will also be desirous of sending me where his influence may have more weight than is consistent with the freedom I wish to enjoy." "Heaven forefend," exclaimed the nurse, holding up her hands, "that I should stir myself in so naughty a cause!—By the holy mass-rood, I will not be the instrument to shut you up from the world! Mercy forbid, that the daughter of my honoured Lady Darcy should be mured up in a cloister, like a fowl in a coop, and become a nun!" "But, my good friend," said I, "you surely must know, that it is possible for me to reside in a cloister, and not take the veil." "Yes, yes," cried she; "I have heard others say the same; but, when the gate is once shut against them, there is such wheedling, and teizing, and enticing, that, I warrant, it is as easy for a bird caught in a trap to escape unhurt;—a

piece of good that does not happen to one in a thousand."

"The evening now drew on, and we were interrupted by the entrance of Urseley; who, I afterwards found, took upon herself the offices of housekeeper, cook, and chambermaid, in my cousin's family, and had under her a poor parish girl, to do the drudgery of the house. This woman was rather tall than otherwise, exceedingly spare, and almost sixty years of age; her face was full of wrinkles; and her nose, crooked downwards like a hawk's bill, protuberated between two small ferret eyes, and nearly reached to her chin, which the loss of her teeth had brought to closer fellowship. Her wimple was wrapped closely about her head, and fastened by the gorget, which was wound round her neck in several small folds, and fastened with a bow in the front: her kirtle was of durance, patched in many places; and this she wore over a

stammel-petticoat, without a surcoat or tunic.

" She came, by the baron's orders, to summon me to supper. My nurse was then preparing to take her leave ; but I entreated her, with tears in my eyes, so earnestly to abide with me that night, that she yielded to my solicitations, and promised me she would not quit the house.

" I followed Dame Urseley to the refectory, where the supper was served with the same parsimony that had prevailed at dinner. I took the earliest opportunity to acquaint my cousin, that I had engaged the nurse to sleep with me that night, and hoped he would excuse my using so much liberty without acquainting him ; a liberty which, I assured him, I should be cautious in exerting in future. He hesitated to answer, and, knitting his brows in silence, gave evident signs of displeasure ; at last, however, he replied, " Why, yes, for this night—but no more.

Every thing is dear, and these kind of people have so little consideration;—and, on your part, I should have thought, the daughter of Lady Darcy would have looked a step higher for a companion." "Sir," said I, with some warmth, "the mind that feels not the strength of an obligation, deserves not to be obliged. This excellent woman was my foster-mother; and her affection for me demands my warmest returns of gratitude."—"Yes, yes, I see you are warm, my cousin," retorted he, with a contemptuous grin; "this excellent woman and you, whose acquaintance, you tell me, is but of a few hours old, are united in the close bonds of romantic friendship.—Excellent mother, excellent daughter! who, discovering each other's virtues by intuition, can already sing each other's panegyric; and, well I wot, to the self-same tune also. By the shrine of St Thomas, I suspect there is some plot in all this! but I will sift it to the bottom." "I beseech you, sir," said

I, "do so; sift till you are tired." "Why, now, you are angry," answered he; "and anger, my cousin, becomes you not.—Well, to please you, the old woman shall stay here this night; it is, however, an indulgence I will not have repeated: The times are hard; the national levies are enormous; and money is gone to the devil, or beyond sea. To-morrow we'll look over the accounts, as they stand between us; and this we can do without the assistance of your excellent old woman: and so, my fair cousin, I wish you good-night."

"So ended this unpleasant interview. I was, however, much rejoiced at having succeeded in my request, notwithstanding the baron's consent was given with so bad a grace. Blessed Virgin Lady! I know not how I should have passed that night, had I been compelled to pass it by myself, shut into a chamber, removed from the rest of the family, at one end of a large and desolate man-

sion, where every casement was a wind-harp, and mourned when beat upon by the passing breezes. The few and miserable inhabitants of this ruin were strangers to me; and the lord himself of the domain, at heart, mine enemy.

"But, to go on:—The nurse and I were conducted to the chamber, and Dame Urseley furnished us with an inch of candle, at the same time informing us, that his lordship did not permit the use of lamps, because the oil was so dear, and generally went to bed by day-light to render candles needless; but this night, in compliment to me, he had passed his usual time.

"When the woman had withdrawn herself, I cast my eyes round the room, which, I think, I have already said was the largest that opened into the long gallery. There were six high windows in it, four on the side, and two at the end, but not one of them perfect; some were altogether closed up with

boards, others partly so; and, where the squares of glass were broken, the deficiency was supplied with bundles of rags, or wisps of hay. The hangings (that is, so much as remained of them) were of arras, and near the bed there stood a chair of state, overhung with the relics of a rich Venetian velvet cover. At a little distance there were two stools without cushions; and, opposite the bed, a large cabinet, decorated with carved work, the drawers of which were much broken, and one of the doors was altogether wanting. The bed itself bore the marks of former elegance; the furniture consisted of a gleaning from the other sleeping rooms woefully mismatched, no one part bearing any resemblance to the other, except in its raggedness. "May holy St Bridget have mercy upon me!" said the good nurse, raising the counterpane; "this is Joseph's coat of many colours, mentioned by Sir John, our curate, last Shrovetide; and surely, by its appear-

ance, it was his coat above an hundred years. My dear lady, the foul fiend has surely taken possession of this house, and Robin Goodfellow played at barley-break in this iniquitous counterpane." I could not help smiling at these comical observations, and returned for answer, "You, I doubt not, my dear nurse, remember well the time, when the face of hospitality made this lone mansion cheerful." "I-warrant me, I do," cried she; "but it is some time back, my lady. Lack-a-day! the great hall was then full of guests; such mirth, such revelry!—I remember me well, the very day after your ladyship was made a Christian, there were great doings here. It was, let me see, upon the nativity of the Blessed Virgin we came from Foleshunt Darcy hither; there was feasting, and piping of minstrels, and juggling tricks, with dancing and mummeries. The horns of strong English huffcap were given away as though it had been water, and the cans of sack and

claret, like wandering stars, were continually in motion; and after all, I warrant, a wine posset was presented to us before we went to our beds.—Benedicite, how the times are altered! Fie upon it, lady! 'tis a naughty world, and continually changing." "We must submit ourselves, my dearest friend," said I, "to the decrees of Providence. While we are under His protection, we have nothing to fear; and He will not forsake us, if we call upon him faithfully:" so saying I fell upon my knees, and made my evening orisons. She pulled out a rosary from her gipsire, and, counting over the beads with great devotion, joined with me in my supplications. She thought the bed was not so well aired as it ought to have been, and, for that reason, we only took off our upper garments, and laid ourselves upon it; for the weather was not cold. She cast, however, a blanket over me; and, covering herself with the same, after some little conversation, she fell asleep.

"I now turned in my mind the singular strangeness of my situation. The title-deeds of my mother's jointure, which I had lost, occasioned me much uneasiness; and then I thought upon that mysterious letter, written by my benefactor; so foreign from the truth, so contradictory to his professions of friendship, and so opposite to the real proofs of benevolence I had experienced from his hands, that I knew not what to think upon the subject. My reflections then led me to the mansion wherein I now resided. Its ruined state; the squalid appearance of the furniture; the protestations of poverty from the owner; the miserable manner in which he lived; partly inclined me to think, that some unfortunate circumstances had really involved my cousin in ruin; and I began to pity rather than condemn him; and I resolved, at no rate to become burthensome to him.—" But then," said I, " what must become of me, if my mother's jointure is also included in that ruin?"

A thousand cogitations floated in my mind. I longed for the approach of morning; and yet I dreaded the explanation I expected at the next interview with my cousin. I closed my eyes towards the morning; but was soon after awakened by the first matin's-bell at Beckentake priory, which is situated in the neighbourhood."

CHAPTER VII.

Lady Emma's History continued.—Her Distresses, and Flight from the Castle of Gaston.

"In less than an hour after my waking, my cousin, who is an early riser, sent Dame Urseley to inform me, that breakfast was ready. I followed her instantly, and the baron seemed pleased at my diligence in preventing his waiting. Our repast consisted of a dish of pottage; the want of meat, to make it palateable, was evident enough, though an attempt was made to supply the deficiency, by enlarging the quantity of garden-herbs, and thickening it with oat-meal. This dainty fare was accompanied by a few stale simnels up-

on a platter. In dealing forth my portion, he harangued, as he had formerly done, upon the excellency of such food; "which," said he, "is not only well adapted to our constitutions, by correcting of evil humours, and preventing of diseases, but it is also cheap, and proper for persons whose incomes are limited."

"When the table was cleared, he removed to his writing-desk, (for we had breakfasted in the library,) and desired me to seat myself near him. After he had examined several parchments, he entered into conversation with me respecting the situation of my claims upon him. He prefaced his discourse with a lamentation upon the hardness of the times, which had put it out of his power to provide for me, in any respect, according to my rank; "but," added he, "your own good sense will naturally suggest to you the necessity of humbling yourself; so far, at least, as to accommodate your mode of living to the

compass of your means. Depending, therefore, upon the exertion of your own understanding, I shall not, I trust, have the least occasion to urge this part of the subject any farther." He then proceeded to inform me, that some demur had been made relative to the payments of the rents upon the jointure, which could only be recovered by a process of law; and that it was absolutely necessary for him to produce the title-deeds, before he could proceed in due form in the courts of judicature; "and these, unfortunately," said he, "if I understood you clearly yesterday, are now in Flanders." I was, of course, reduced to the necessity of informing him, that they were not in Flanders, but had been destroyed by the flames at Bellericay. This intelligence affected him greatly; he waved his head in silence, and leaning it upon his right hand, which covered his eyes, sat several minutes absorbed in meditation. At last he looked up, and exclaimed at the same

time, "By the soul of St Becket, I fear the case is desperate!—But," added he, after a second pause, "I will cast in my mind what can be done for you. I will support your cause, if it lie within the compass of possibility." I was going to reply, but he prevented me, saying, "Leave me alone; the law is against us. I must turn this matter over in my mind.—I will send for you again presently, when I have formed my judgment upon the subject."

"Agreeably to his request, I arose from my seat, and retired to my chamber, where I expected to meet the nurse, for I had not taken my leave. Not finding her, I rang the bell, and, upon inquiry, was told, that she had been dismissed by the baron's positive order; and desired, not to give herself the least farther concern respecting me, nor offer to repeat her visit to Gay Bowers. I was exceedingly mortified at hearing that the good dame had been dismissed with so much

rudeness; I determined, however, to take an opportunity of seeing her again, and, if possible, establish some method of communication between us. I depended much upon her sincerity and affection; and made no doubt but, through her means, I should be able to procure some respectable situation, in which, at least, I might pass my time with less anxiety and irksomeness than seemed to await me at my cousin's.

" Dinner was served up this day at an earlier hour than usual. The baron was exceedingly thoughtful, and troubled me with very few comments upon the meanness or healthiness of the repast. The moment we had dined he caused the table to be cleared; and when I arose to quit the room, he desired me to be seated again. I obeyed; and he, with much prolixity of speech, set forth many great things that he had done for our family, many of them tending to his own detriment. That the regard he entertained for his father's

sister, had led him to advance large sums of money; most of which he had been necessitated to borrow, and at exorbitant interest. To repay these sums, he found himself much straitened; and, because it was not always in his power to keep time with his promises, the creditors had threatened to foreclose the mortgages; which, if carried into execution, would effect his ruin. For this reason, it was impossible for him to support me with the least degree of splendour, and he well knew my spirit would not permit me to become burthensome to him. "But what," said I, hastily, "am I to depend upon? To what limits may my expectances be extended? and what steps are proper for me to pursue?" He shook his head, cast down his eyes, and, with a stifled sigh, replied, "I am sorry to tell you—but necessity requires the truth at my hands—I am sorry, I say, to tell you, that your dependencies are smaller than you seem in the least to be aware of. The law-suit, which is

inevitable, will swallow up your expectancies; for the law is a devouring vortex, which draws into its insatiable maw every thing that comes within its reach. With respect to the last part of your question, I can see nothing more proper for you to do, than go to some distant part of England, where, changing your name, and concealing your rank, you may engage as an attendant upon the lady of some opulent nobleman."

"Out upon the wretch!" cried the Lady Eleanor; "he is quite a barbarian."

Lady Darcy smiled at the ejaculation, and continued the narrative.—"I was petrified with astonishment at hearing such an unexpected statement of my situation, and knew not how to frame my answer. He perceived my embarrassment, and added, that the proposal he had made to me was grounded upon the supposition that the worst should happen; and if the law-suit, contrary to his expectation, took a favourable turn, I might, when the

incumbrances were cleared from the estates, reassume my name, and be enabled to support my rank, if not with splendor, at least with credit. "But as Jesu shall save me," said he, "this must be a work of time; and how it is you are to be clothed and fed while all these supposititious comforts are in agitation, unless my plan, or some one like it, be carried into execution, I cannot divine." As soon as I could recollect myself sufficiently to answer him, I said, "It is no part of my design to be in any manner burthensome to you; and, if necessity compels me to work for my own support, I shall with cheerfulness submit myself to my allotment: but I hope and I trust, my exertions may be made for that purpose in a manner more delicate than that of positive servitude. I have in the early part of my life been taught to draw flowers and foliage for works of embroidery, and am in some degree a mistress of my needle: a diligent pursuit of these arts will furnish arti-

cles of ready sale, and provide, at least, means for my support with decency." "I shall be glad to find it so," said he: "for my own part, I wish to see you settled in some permanent and proper situation." At this instant the steward appeared, and announced to my cousin Mister Reynard, who was waiting for him in the library. On hearing this, he started up, saying, "He is a man deeply learned in the law; I have sent for him upon your account:"—but seeing that I was in tears, he took me by the hand, telling me, it was but folly and weakness to be weeping like a child, when reason told me the frowns of fortune were not to be avoided.

"When I quitted my cousin, I hastened to my own apartment; and not having any one to whom I could communicate my sorrows, I sat down and wept. After I had dried up my tears, it came into my mind that the good nurse would in all probability wait some little time at Danbury, in expectation of hear-

ing from me; and although great part of the day was elapsed, I determined to walk out, and endeavour to find the inn whither the horses were sent upon our arrival at Gay Bowers; at least, thought I, a survey of the country, altogether new to me, and the fresh air, will be reviving to my spirits. Accordingly, I threw my surcoat over my super-tunic, and casting my veil across my arm, went down to the lower court. When I came to the gate, I found it fastened, and the steward approached, as I supposed, to open it; but, on the contrary, he informed me, that it was his lordship's strict command to prevent my egress thence. I made him no reply, but was much alarmed at finding myself a prisoner; and from this moment I began seriously to believe, that the intention of Saint Clere was to destroy me. I therefore returned to my chamber like one doomed to death, but uncertain when or how the sentence should be executed. Two or three

hours afterwards, the baron sent for me into the library; and upon my entering the room, I was introduced to a little swarthy-faced man, exceedingly ill-favoured, with a large pair of glasses upon his nose: he had several parchments spread before him, and upon one of them he was then writing. "This gentleman," said my cousin, "is a man eminently learned in the law. We have had a long consultation concerning your case, and he will read to you an accurate statement of the accounts between yourself and me; by which he will make it clear to you, that I have been just to one farthing." Here the lawyer, requesting me to pay attention to him, held up the parchment to the light, to which occasionally he referred, and pestered me with a long harangue replete with technical terms of law; by which I was informed, that he had minutely examined the documents which his client had put into his hands, and thereby it appeared, that the nett monies from time to

time remitted beyond sea, amounted to one thousand four hundred and sixty-two pounds one shilling and sixpence three farthings more than *per* receipts had been produced from the estates, which additional monies client had raised by mortgages on the jointure;—said mortgages, with the interest thence arising, amounts to one thousand six hundred and ninety-eight pounds fourteen shillings and elevenpence farthing; which mortgages and interest client not being able to pay, the mortgagees had given notice, in proper form, the mortgages will be foreclosed on the eve of Saint Michael next ensuing, and the estates seized. Client, therefore, was compelled to hold the said jointure to sale, or engage in a suit of law, which, from the want of title-deeds, he could not justify. The said estates, therefore, being fairly valued, were found to be worth one thousand seven hundred and forty-nine pounds thirteen shillings and four-pence half-penny; from which the said mort-

gage monies and interest being duly deducted, there would remain a nett sum of fifty pounds eighteen shillings and five-pence farthing due to legal heir to said estates.

"I could hardly contain myself at hearing this infamous statement: however, I held my my peace; for I well knew the estates could not be legally sold without my concurrence, which I supposed it was the design of this confederacy to obtain: and my worthy relation presently convinced me, that my conjectures were founded on the truth. "You see now, my dear cousin," said he, taking me by the hand, "the justness of my former observations: this candid examination of the accounts between us must convince you how much you are a sufferer through the extravagancy of your family. The estates are, as you are told, incumbered past redemption, and nothing but the sale of them can secure to you the slender pittance which remains your due. On my part, it is impossible for

me to supply you with one cross more; the monies I have borrowed must be paid,—but I have no such monies to pay: we are, therefore, compelled to sell. Well, then, this gentleman," pointing to the lawyer, "who is an honest and responsible man, has provided a purchaser for us at the valuation specified." I remained silent, and he went on: "You must,—let me tell you, the offer is not to be refused. The estates are in a disordered condition; the tenements upon them are out of repair; the fences are broken down, and the land worn out for want of manure. In fact, the bidder is a young ignorant springal, just come to the possession of much wealth, and has got more money than sagacity: but that is not our enquiry. Now I have caused Mister Reynard to draw up an instrument, which you must sign, which will enable me to dispose of the said estates without producing the title-deeds; and I, without making any charge for my own trou-

ble, or for the business done by this gentleman, will pay you the sum of fifty pounds eighteen shillings and five-pence farthing, which in times like these, while money is so scarce, will be a little fortune. You tell me you possess abilities to follow the profession of pattern-making and embroidering: go to then, this sum will enable you to set forward with credit, and establish you on a footing superior to most of your competitors."—I could hear no more; but, instead of answering him, burst into tears, and rising hastily, I quitted the room, and retired to my own apartment, where I gave full scope to my sorrows, and cast myself upon the bed in an agony better to be conceived than described.

"In the evening, Urseley called me to supper; but I excused my attendance, and assured her I found myself so seriously ill, that it was necessary for me to go to my bed. The good dame expressed her sorrow for my indisposition, and offered her assistance. I

thanked her, and told her, that rest was what I most wanted. She retired, but soon returned to inform me, that the baron was hugely angry at my refusal, and declared I should repent the giving myself such airs: on her own part, she advised me to pacify his fury, by complying with his request; but I persisted in my resolution, and began to prepare myself for the night; when, seeing me so inflexible, she shook her head, and departed. I fastened the door, and passed the night in severe affliction; my spirits were woefully dejected by the apprehensions I had entertained in my mind concerning my personal safety, and every moment I expected to see a ruffian bursting into my apartment, and pointing his rapier to my bosom. The night, however, passed over, and I experienced no other disturbance than what arose from my own imagination; the morning sun illumined my chamber, and dispersed much of the melancholy gloom which had depressed

my mind. I blamed myself for indulging such unworthy suspicions on the part of my cousin, and determined, though I was exceedingly unwell, to get myself ready at an early hour, and attend him the moment he called for me. When we met, he reproached me with haughtiness and ingratitude. I assured him, that my refusal to attend him proceeded from my indisposition. "I am willing," said he, "to believe it; but the best proof that you can give of your respect for me, is to put an end to this useless altercation, and to sign the deed." "I will not deceive you, my cousin," answered I; "nor tell you falsely that I respect you more than I do justice. This proposal is not only unjust, but it is withal so contrary to reason, that I cannot, nay, I dare not acquiesce." He received this reply with more patience than I expected, and, instead of ordering me from the room, ran into a long tract of arguments to counteract my objections: most of them

were absolutely contradictory with each other, and all of them so inconclusive, that a person less skilled than myself in debatement must have discovered their flimsiness. Perceiving, at length, that his sophistical reasonings had not the power to convince me, he lost his temper, and, changing his mode of address, descended to the use of scurrilous invectives; upon which I withdrew. Nearly a fortnight elapsed without any material changement in my situation at Gay Bowers. Every day I was pestered over and over again with fallacious arguments, tauntings, scoldings, and threatenings, to induce me to sign the parchment; and I constantly rejected the proposal, without respecting the form in which it was exhibited. Our meetings continually ended in bickerments, and tears and fearful apprehensions were the companions of my solitude.

"In the mean time, I became more familiar with Dame Urseley, and found her to be a plain, simple woman, unnurtured indeed,

but her heart was sincere and compassionate. She was well acquainted with the impetuosity of her master's temper; and, not knowing the nature of the requisition, frequently pressed me, with tears in her eyes, to appease his anger by submission. She related to me variety of circumstances, which evinced the cruelty of his disposition when opposed; and one in particular, which I shall relate, to the best of my memory, in her own words:— "By'r Lady, I one day weened he would have quelled old Gaunt the reve; and wot ye well why? the seely hylding medeld with the hosteler's business, and 'plained to Lord Eustace, that his favourite nag was doen to die for the lack of corn, and all for the hest of the imp his son. What does me the lordling, then not passing thrice five years? marry, he drew out his gilt dagger, and cast it incontinently at the reve's sconce; and had not the baron his father arraught his arm, he would have foined the carving thwittle

through his heart." "Was he so outrageous," said I, "in his father's lifetime?" "Gad's my life," answered the dame, "I were a dead woman if he were told of what I now areed thee!" I assured her she might depend upon my secrecy: and she went on to inform me, that he held the mastery at Gay Bowers for several years previous to the decease of Lord Eustace, who, it seems, was confined to his chamber, and knew but little of what was passing below, where the servants were discharged, the wonted good cheer abolished, the visitants affronted, and the mansion nearly forsaken. In the mean time, no repairs were done; the furniture was suffered to fall to decay for want of care; "and, mercy on us!" continued Urseley, "in a year or twain more, his lordship, I trow, will be buried in the ruins of his own dwelling."

"Curiosity led me one day to visit the chapel belonging to this extensive edifice; for I think I before observed that Gaston

kept no chaplain to bless his food, or perform the morning and evening service. Upon my entering the consecrated dome, where, apparently, no human beings had for some time presented themselves, I found every thing in the rudest disorder: the door was unhinged, the windows broken, the floor was covered with filth; part of the holy rood was fallen to the ground, and the birds made a roost of the mutilated remnant; the altar was overthrown, its ornaments destroyed, and upon its ruins lay the great missal, mouldering away with the damps which fell upon it; the copes, the albs, the stoles, and other decorative vestments for the use of the priests and choristers, were sacrilegiously taken from their places, and only a tattered surplice or two of no value left behind. I bent my knee upon the altar-steps, and, crossing myself, devoutly deprecated the vengeance of God from falling upon the head of that unhappy man, who had suffered this noble edifice to

be so vilely polluted; and then retired to my chamber.

"One morning, some time afterwards, when my cousin and I were sitting at breakfast, he was particularly pressing for me to sign the deed, and I as positively refused to comply. After much altercation, he flew into a violent passion, and, catching up a salver from the table, I verily thought he would have thrown it at me. I remembered what Urseley told me, and trembled for the event; but upon recollecting himself, he cast it down disdainfully, saying, "By the blood of Saint Thomas, I will be revenged! The estates shall be sold; the mortgages shall be paid; and I will thrust thee forth into the wide world, without one single cross to help thyself; or shut thee up in a prison as an impostor,—as a vile counterfeit giglet, and practiser of charms and sorcery." To these incivilities I made no answer, and was preparing to quit the

room; when he rose from his chair, and, placing himself before the door, swore by his Redeemer, that I should not depart until I had signed the deed. "Then take my life at once, insatiate Gaston," said I, "and add the crime of murder to the abuses you have already heaped upon me!"—Here he clapped his hand upon his dagger hilt.—"Spare not," continued I, "courageous cousin, spare not a weak, defenceless woman, thy father's sister's orphan! for rest assured, that I will sooner permit thee to bury thy dagger in my bosom, than set my hand to that vile parchment, or sanction thy villanies by my assignment." The exertions I had made in this interview were beyond my strength; and at the end of these last altercations, I sunk down into my chair, and nearly swooned. He saw my disorder, and withdrawing himself a little from me, he walked hastily backwards and forwards in the room, swearing great oaths, and devoting vengeance with horrible

imprecations. Before I was sufficiently recovered to renew the conversation, his servant entered, and delivered a letter to him, which he opened immediately, and upon reading the same, was still more violently agitated than before: he stamped and raved to such a degree, that I actually thought he was deprived of his senses. He read it a second time, and then striking his right hand sharply upon his forehead, he exclaimed, "I am born to be unfortunate—to be cheated! Here again my fair hopes are frost-bitten in the blossom;—the powers of earth and hell are surely united against me!" He then threw down the letter, and after a short pause, casting his eyes upon the parchment deed, which had occasioned so much altercation between us, he caught it in a fury, and having scored it several times across with the writing knife, he tore it in pieces, and throwing it with great indignation upon the floor, he stamped upon it, raving and foaming at the mouth

like a baited bear; when turning with a contemptuous air to me, he extended both his arms, as though he would thrust me away, and cried, "Out of my sight, impostor,—sorceress! that letter—curse on the sender!—beggars thee; it sets aside thy claim, and ends our controversy. Begone, I say!" continued he, throwing back the door with much fury; "begone, and let me see you no more!" To argue with a madman, (for such he appeared to be,) in the paroxysm of his passion, I thought was useless, and might be dangerous: I therefore hastily obeyed his commands, and making the best of my way to my chamber, I fastened the door, and held myself secure for the present.

"The more I reflected upon the conduct of the baron, so incompatible with reason, the more I was at a loss to account for it; the rending of the deed, which a few minutes before he had been so anxious for me to ratify; the expressions he made use of upon

the occasion, and the declaration that my claim to the jointure was set aside by the contents of the letter he had received, were incomprehensible mysteries. "Surely," said I to myself, "Saint Clere has really lost his senses, or he is meditating some new plot to entrap me by artifice." And therefore I determined to proceed with caution; for I was well assured it was no part of his design to do me justice.

"While I was occupied with these cogitations, Urseley rapped at my door: I opened it to her, when she appeared with tears in her eyes, saying, "What have you done, lady, to my master? The baron, I wot me well, is as wode as crazy Wallis the weaver." She told me, that he swore I had imposed upon him, and made such vows of vengeance, that her hair stood on end to hear him. She then proposed, of her own accord, to excuse my going down to dinner, because she thought it might be dangerous for me to appear be-

fore him while he remained unpacified. I readily acquiesced; for I had previously resolved, upon no account, to see Saint Clere any more that day. The good dame brought me to my chamber a small piece of veal, with a dish of white broth, and a simmel of wheaten bread: to oblige her I took a few mouthfuls; but in truth I was but little inclined to eat. Urseley was more cheerful than before, and informed me, that the baron had enquired after me, and expressed some compassion for my indisposition, and was in a much better humour than he had been. I told her I felt myself exceedingly unwell, and requested her to excuse me again on that account, if my cousin should desire to see me at supper. "I am," said I, "very low and faint for want of sleep, and shall therefore retire to my bed at an early hour." She assented, and withdrew. At the close of the evening, I fastened my door, undressed, and laid myself down to rest

at the time the completory was rung at the neighbouring priory.

"The inconsistent behaviour of Saint Clere filled my mind with new apprehensions for my safety; and the gloom of the night added strength to the powers of imagination, and rendered my melancholy situation doubly irksome. I was weary for want of rest, yet I could not hastily close my eyes in sleep; and when perchance I did so, the dreams of the night were little other than uncouth continuations of my waking visions, full of terrific images and baleful forebodings of disastrous events. I heard, or thought I heard, the priory bell tolling at midnight; and sometime afterwards I was aroused from my sleep by an unusual noise in my chamber. The moment I opened my eyes I saw a great light, which alarmed me prodigiously, and recalled to my mind the calamitous accident of Bellericay. I started up instantly, and throwing the curtains aside, beheld a ghastly spectre

standing at the foot of the bed; it bore the appearance of a tall human figure, wrapped in a winding-sheet; its countenance, the only part I saw uncovered, was that of a skeleton, the jaws were fleshless, and the eyes corroded from their sockets. The light I had observed proceeded from a large lamp borne by this goblin, but in such a manner, that the hand and arm which supported it was not visible. I fell back upon my pillow affrighted, and uttering a loud shriek, drew up the counterpane over my face. Some time passed before I dared to look out again; I then perceived that the apparition moved, and was approaching by slow degrees. I repeated my evening prayers, and recommended myself to the protection of God and the blessed Virgin. It came yet nearer to me; when, taking courage, I thus addressed myself to it: "In the name of that blessed Lord, who suffered upon the holy rood for the redemption of sinners, what art thou, and wherefore art thou come?"

It stopped, adawed by the adjuration, and a hollow voice replied, "I am thy friend;—be warned by me, and fly this place, for evil waits thee here." This said, before I could frame an answer, the spectre retreated a step or two, when the light was suddenly extinguished. I heard a rumbling sound somewhat resembling distant thunder, succeeded by a crashing noise, like the thrusting back of a heavy shutter; after which all was quiet. Recovering from my fright, so soon as I was able to reflect coolly upon this extraordinary visitation, I began to suspect that the whole of it was a contrivance of my cousin's. I had narrowly watched the figure while the voice was uttered, and perceived that the jaws were motionless, neither did the articulation appear to proceed from the mouth, and its movements, in approaching and receding from me, were exceedingly awkward, and inconsistent with nature; besides, the friendly admonition it pretended to give me

was altogether useless, without the information by what means my escape might be effected. I waited impatiently for the morning, when I scrutinized my chamber most minutely, and, to my great surprise, I found every thing precisely in the same state I had left them, and the door was bolted upon the inside. I examined the hangings, but found no recess sufficient for a hiding-place, nor the least appearance of their having been disturbed; the casements, which were high up in the room, were fastened within; a closet door at the foot of the bed was secured by a bar, which I had put up before I went to bed. In short, I began to doubt the evidence of my own senses, and question the reality of the apparition; which, however, if it was no more than a dream, was the most wonderful one I ever experienced.

" Urseley came to my door at least an hour sooner than usual; I instantly admitted her, but did not think it proper to communicate

to her, at that time, what I had seen. Upon my inquiring what had occasioned so early a visit, she shook her head, and, entering the room, sat down upon the side of the bed, and began to sob and wring her hands, like one in deep affliction. I was much affected at seeing her in this condition, and anxiously intreated her to acquaint me with the cause. She assured me that her fears and her sorrows were all upon my account; for she verily believed, that it was the intention of the baron to cause me to be murdered. Seeing me turn pale and tremble upon receiving this information, she advised me not to let my presence of mind forsake me, because my safety would probably depend in a great measure upon my courage. She then proceeded to tell me, he was at that moment shut up in the library with two ruffians, noted for their villanies: That she had listened at the door, (for they had been two hours in conversation,) and heard my name mentioned several

times. She then advised me to go down and take a turn or two in the great court, as I had sometimes done before, for the sake of the air, and it was probable I might see them pass. "You will easily know them," said she, "by their ill-favouredness."

"I approved of her proposal; and, throwing my veil over my head, descended into the hall, where I soon afterwards saw the two ruffians coming from the library, and followed by St Clere, who was engaged with them in earnest conversation. They were both of them sturdy knaves, clad in thick jerkins of leather, girt with thongs. For reverence sake, they carried their thrum-caps in their hands, which exposed their bare heads and faces, overgrown with hair, not often troubled with a comb, and begrimed with filth. They had each of them a large knotted club of wood, and a small shield hanging upon the left shoulder; but he whom I took to be the chief, had also a long rusty sword, without a

sheath, depending from a baldric of leather, with a dagger and a butcher's thwittle stuck in his girdle. To this man I distinctly heard the baron say these words, "Remember to make all sure." He was going to answer, when, turning his head suddenly, he saw me within hearing, and, holding his forefinger to his lips, he bowed in token of assent, and, with his comrade, withdrew.

"Are you come!" said St Clere, somewhat confused; "I did not expect to find you here at this early hour: But it is well;—go with me into the library:" so saying, he took my hand and led me to a seat. When leaning upon his writing-desk, he made an awkward apology for the harsh language he had used the day before. He declared, that he had received letters from the Lord High Chancellor's office, establishing a claim to my mother's jointure upon the part of the crown, and an order for the sequestration of the es-

tate, and payment into the court of chancery of the monies arising from them for nearly twenty years back. "These monies," continued he, "with large surplusses, have been remitted to your family, and what am I to do in this case. Pay the monies I cannot; and, if I resist, I involve myself in ruin by a tedious chancery suit." He paused. On my part, I did not believe one syllable of all he had uttered. The story was altogether incongruous with common reason; and I really knew not how to answer him. He saved me the trouble, and went on;—"I see you are astonished at these extraordinary proceedings; and so, in truth, was I, until I received this letter from a friend of mine at London, in the afternoon of yesterday:" so saying, he put into my hands a letter, addressed to himself; the contents of which were to the following purport:

"Dear Saint Clere,

"I remember you told me, when I was at Gay Bowers about two months back, that your cousin, the young Lady Darcy, was deceased in Flanders. Judge, then, how much I was surprized, at finding a young woman in town, professing herself to be the daughter and sole heiress of John Lord Darcy and Anne St Clere! Her claim is vigorously supported by the Baron B——, your avowed enemy; who has, in her name, instituted a suit in the court of chancery against you for the recovery of the Darcy estates. You well know, that nothing can be done in this court without the advance of prodigious sums of money; but, on the other hand, you are equally certain, that money has an irresistible power. The baron is liberal of his purse, and you know he is immensely rich: The advocates are fee'd to their hearts desire; and, I fear, if it be not hastily prevented, a seques-

tration will be granted. I have therefore taken the earliest opportunity to give you this information. Yours," &c.

To this epistle was subscribed a name totally unknown to me, and which I do not remember. At the bottom was added, "I have seen the young woman; she is neither handsome, nor well nurtured; but, no doubt, her patron has tutored her for his purpose."

"As soon as I had finished reading the letter, St Clere resumed his speech in this manner: "You see, my cousin, by that letter, my meaning yesterday, when I mentioned another claimant to the jointure estates. For my own part, I am satisfied you are the real heir, and, of course, your title must be substantiated to obviate the other's claim; and herein we have to lament the loss of those important parchments you brought from Flanders with you. Your appearance will be indispensably necessary, as a witness,

when the time is ripe to bring you forward, and will be the only means left to us to defeat our rival; and if I must be ruined, (as, God shall judge me, seems inevitable either way!) I had better suffer for a relative, than for a stranger, an impostor!—But as your appearance in England is of so recent a date, if you continue under my roof, the chancellor may suspect you also of being a deceiver in collusion with me, and brought forward to answer my own purposes. I have, therefore, carefully turned this matter in my mind, and will to-morrow, if it please you, send you, under the conduct of two of my tenants, to the dwelling of my steward's sister, upon the forest near High Ongar, where you may live at ease, your own mistress, and I, from time to time, will send you word concerning the progress of the law-suit. Consider this proposal well; and, when we meet again at dinner, I shall be glad to hear your determination."—He then rose from his seat, and quitted the

room. I followed; and, going to my chamber, scrutinized it a second time, in order, if possible, to account for the appearance of the goblin upon natural principles; but in vain. I then attempted to investigate the motives of my cousin's mysterious conduct, but without being able to afford myself the least satisfaction. My situation, on all sides, wore a most gloomy aspect; my destruction seemed to be inevitable; I could not realize any solid hope for escape; and the more I pondered upon it, the more my imagination was bewildered.

"At this moment came Urseley. I told her the baron and myself were better reconciled to each other than we had formerly been, and that he had proposed my removal from Gay Bowers to the dwelling of the reve's sister upon the forest near Ongar, and that I was to be conducted thither by two of his tenants. Upon which the faithful creature burst into tears, and said to this effect:

"My dearest lady, the baron's smiles are more to be feared than his frowns. Benedicite, I warrant you he meditates your death! God forbid that I should lie unto you!—Old Gaunt has no such sister near Ongar; and, Holy Mary so save me! the two tenants, he speaks of, are none other than the two cut-throat caitiffs you saw just now; and, in the forest, instead of a house, I fear me, lady, you will find your grave." "But, my good friend," cried I, grasping her hand, "if St Clere be resolved upon my destruction, how am I to avoid it? Should I refuse to quit this mansion, may he not employ those wicked ministers of blood to murder me here.—Tell me, I beseech you, if you know, what course I can pursue!" "I have thought of it," said the good dame; "leave the matter to me.—But, when you appear before the baron, pretend to acquiesce with his proposal: Keep him in the humour you find him at present; to irritate him may be dangerous. I will see

you again soon after dinner, but must quit you now; it is not proper we should be seen consulting together.—I will, if possible, effect your escape, and save your life at the hazard of my own." This spontaneous flow of affection, from one who was so little interested in my success, made a strong impression upon my mind; and I rejoiced in having obtained the friendship of so excellent a woman. I could not indeed divine, by what means she intended to provide for my safety, or conquer the fears to which my reflections gave birth. I embraced the shadow, as it were, of hope, and resolved to comply with the admonitions of my good friend.

"At dinner St Clere was in a better humour than I had hitherto seen him; and, when I declared myself willing to comply with his request, he was exceedingly pleased, and assured me I should not want a protector while he breathed.

"On my return to my apartment, I found Urseley waiting for me. "Shut the door, my dear lady," said she; "and hark, in your ear, I have provided the means for your escape." "As how, my dear friend?" said I, hastily. "Why, you must know," replied she, "at the lower part of the garden, the wind has blown down a portion of the wall into the moat, and nearly filled it up; so that, with the assistance of a few planks, which I have procured, being laid across, you may easily pass over; and close by the side of the breach is the path which leads directly to Danbury town." "But how shall I get into the garden, my dear Urseley?" said I.— "When the doors of the house are locked," replied she, "and the keys carried to the baron." She then drew forth a key from her pouch, saying, "This key belongs to a small postern which leads to the garden, and through the same I will conduct thee thither." To this I replied, "But will not my

escape, thus made, subject you to the anger of the baron. He certainly will conclude, that it could not have been done without your assistance. Such a suspicion may be fatal to you; and, my dear friend, though life and liberty are desireable objects, they will be too dearly purchased at such a price. I should never be happy in future, if your days are to be shortened to lengthen mine." "Have no such fear, my dear lady," answered the faithful dame, "I have provided a remedy for this evil also. The moment I have seen you safely set forward from this mansion, I will tie the sheets of your bed together, and, fastening them to the bar of one of the casements, let them hang down to the ground. If possible, I will suffer the alarm to come from some one else, and it will be readily believed, that you have effected your own escape." I expressed my gratitude to her in the warmest terms; but, at the same time, I was myself ashamed to have recourse

to such mean subterfuges, and nothing short of the apprehensions of a premature and cruel death could have forced me to comply with them.

"At supper St Clere and I met for the last time. He requested me to prepare myself for the journey in the fore part of the day, because he had some matters of importance to communicate to me; and, in order that I might not be late upon the road, he had ordered dinner to be provided at an early hour, immediately after which he thought it proper for me to be gone. "I will not," continued he, "send you away without something to ensure your welcome whither you are going. Take this purse;"—at the same time putting one into my hands—"it contains the sum of twenty angels in gold, which, I trust, you will use with discretion, for, as Christ shall judge me, I borrowed them with much difficulty;—and this is all I can do for you at present; for the times are hard, the subsi-

dies enormous, and this law-suit, I fear, will ruin us both." He then changed the discourse, and advised me, at all events, to improve my talents in drawing and needle-work, promising to lend me all the assistance that lay in his power; so that, had I not been convinced of his vile duplicity, I should have thought his heart had been softened by the sensations of humanity. Nay, more, he took me by the hand, when he bade me good-night, and pressed it to his lips; a gallantry he had not heretofore been guilty of, and which I could have readily dispensed with at that time.

"When Urseley attended with my light, I begged of her to come to me again as soon as possible, because I was fearful of being alone, owing to some uncommon disturbance which broke my rest the preceding night.—To this she replied, with a smile, "Truly, my lady, we often hear strange noises and voices in this deserted mansion. Old Gaunt says,

that spirits walk in the chambers; but, in sooth, I never saw them."

"After she was gone, I sat down and wept. What was to become of me I knew not; nor whither to fly for safety. I had not sufficient money to carry me back to Flanders. I had no friend to whom I could make any application, excepting my nurse at Baddow, and to her I determined to make the best of my way. I then threw myself upon my knees, and pouring out my heart before my Maker, committed myself to his guidance, and made my orisons to the Blessed Virgin, and the saints in Heaven.

"It was midnight before Urseley returned, and I was fearful that some accident had occasioned her delay. She brought with her a lanthorn; and, with a smile, assured me that all was secured. I showed her the purse with the money which my cousin had given me, and pressed her to take a part of it for her trouble. She peremptorily refused; saying,

with tears in her eyes, "Holy Jesu forbid I should touch the price of innocent blood! for well I ween, my dear lady, that money was intended for the villains who were to kill you.—Poor dear-lamb! you were appointed to be the bearer of the meed for your own murder." Her words chilled my blood; I trembled, and the purse with the gold fell from my hand. "Is it possible," cried I; "May Heaven forgive him!" "Speak lower, for our Blessed Lady's sake!" said the good dame; "Consider the jeopardy in which we stand. An alarm, at this moment, would discover all our plan, and hazard the death of both." She took up the purse, which lay upon the floor, and, thrusting it into my gipsire, added, with a whisper, "The gold is innocent, and requisite withal." The few things I had to take with me were comprised in a short compass, and formed a parcel by no means cumbersome; I was therefore very soon prepared for my departure. Urseley put

the light into the lanthorn, and we descended cautiously, passing through the great hall, and along a dark narrow passage to the postern, which she unlocked, and we entered the garden; and, without meeting with any interruption, we proceeded to that part of it where the wall was broken down. In passing over the planks, either through my negligence, or one of them not being securely placed, I lost my foot-hold, and had not Urseley supported me, at the hazard of her own safety, I should inevitably have fallen into the water. Having escaped the danger, my faithful conductress put me into the path leading to Danbury town, through which it was necessary for me to pass in my way to Great Baddow, whither I intended to direct my steps, and use every exertion in order to reach that place before my flight should be discovered at Gay Bowers. I embraced my dear friend Urseley with much affection, and the good dame bade me farewell, commend-

ing me to the care of God and the blessed Virgin Mary.

"The night was clear, and the stars shone brightly; but, as I was a stranger to the place, and was exceedingly fearful of mistaking the road, I proceeded with caution, which somewhat retarded my progress; however, at the break of day, I found myself in the midst of Danbury town, and near to the church, but not a soul was stirring excepting a person who opened the door of an inn, and from his dress I took him to be the master. He seemed surprised at seeing a person of my sex and appearance there so early in the morning; and I being fearful he might interrupt me with some impertinent questions, hastened by him; and he, on his part, permitted me to pass without saying a syllable to me. I soon afterwards came to an open green, with some tall elms upon the midst of it, and finding here two roads, I was at a loss which of them to take; and here I determined to

wait a little space, in hopes that some one might pass who could direct me. I sat down upon a bench erected at the bottom of one of the trees, and casting my eyes over the prospect which lay before me, saw a large town which appeared to be at no great distance. I cast my eyes presently behind me, and wished myself at that great town.

"At this moment a young rustic approached, carrying a wallet at his back, supported by a long staff upon his shoulder. He informed me, that the town I saw was five miles distant, and called Chelmsford. I then enquired for Baddow. "Great Baddow I suppose you mean," said the lad, "it lies in your way to Chelmsford; you may see the spire of the church between the trees of yonder coppice." "But which of these two roads," said I, "will lead me thither." "That," quoth he, "which lies straight before; this, on the left, leads you to Grayes: But the nearest foot-path to Baddow is through the park belonging to

Darbury-Place, on the left hand." At the same time he told me, there were many deer in the park, which perhaps might frighten me, but added, that he was himself going that way to Haningfield, and would prevent them from hurting me. He seemed to be a simple honest lad, and I made no hesitation of placing myself under his protection. We passed the park without the least interruption. I saw it was true that the deer were in great numbers, but they were at a distance from us. When we regained the main road, my guide directed me to the right, he turning to the left. I gave him a small piece of silver for his civility, with which he was well satisfied; and bidding me good-morrow, went forward singing, as merrily as a lark.

I now made the most of my time, and hurried on, not indeed without frequently looking behind me, expecting every minute to see my pursuers following my footsteps. I reached Baddow soon after sun-rise, where enqui-

ring out the habitation of the nurse, had the mortification to find it close shut up, and was informed by the neighbours, that she and her husband had been sent for to Hertford, by a special message the day before, to attend his sister, who lived near that town, and was dangerously ill, so that the time of their return was altogether uncertain.

"This unexpected disappointment plunged me into a terrible dilemma. I knew not what steps to take, and the exigence of the moment required an immediate decision. It was impossible for me to remain where I was in safety. I knew not one soul in the hamlet; and, of course, had no claim to protection from the outrages of my pursuers, who might readily discover where I had taken refuge. The first thought that occurred, suggested the propriety of going instantly to Bellericay; but a minute's reflection set that determination aside; "for thither," said I to myself, "the ruffians will naturally follow me; and

supposing that I might perchance escape their malice, through the interposition of my generous benefactress, her benevolence would certainly ensure her ruin; for Gaston de St Clere is an implacable enemy." I then turned my thoughts towards Chelmsford; and finding the distance to that town did not much exceed a mile, I determined, at all events, to walk thither without delay; for I saw, or thought I saw, the good people, who had answered my enquiries, pierced my embarrassment, and was fearful they might probably draw some unfavourable conclusions from it. I therefore bade them good-morrow, and went forward.

"I was somewhat alarmed, soon after quitting Baddow, by seeing the same young man, who had conducted me through Danbury park, cross the road before me. He touched his bonnet as he passed; and, without saying a word, struck into a meadow, on the right hand, and went singing towards a mill,

which stands upon the river at no great distance. I began to fear the lad was employed to watch me; but the simplicity of his appearance soon checked that thought, and I blamed myself for suspecting him.

"This circumstance, trifling as it may appear, made me resolve to quit that part of the country, and follow my nurse to Hertford, where I had some hope to meet with her, or at least I conceived I should be more secure from the enquiries of St Clere.

"On my arrival at Chelmsford, I went to one of the principal inns, distinguished by the sign of the Saracen, or Man Quintain, where I took some small refreshment, and enquired the ready way to Hertford, and was told, I could not do better than go through Dunmow or Storford. I instantly ordered horses and a guide, being determined to get as forward on my journey as I could that day. We left Chelmsford about nine o'clock, and my guide took me through Waltham to

Braintree. This road, he informed me, was somewhat more about than another he could have taken me, but, at the same time, was so much better, that the additional distance was not worth consideration. We took some dinner at the Bugle-horn at Braintree, and proceeded, in the afternoon, to Dunmow, where we arrived before sun-set; but I had ridden upwards of twenty-miles. I was too much fatigued to go any farther that evening, and bespoke a bed at the inn to which my guide conducted me, which seemed to be the best in the town.

"Upon my entering of Dunmow, a very young man passed by me, nearly resembling the lad I have before mentioned; but he was dressed in a riding coat, girt with a broad belt of leather. The difference of his dress, and the distance from Danbury, convinced me that it was another person; and yet I could not help being somewhat disquieted at seeing him. I resolved to pursue my journey

early the next day; and accordingly, having provided fresh horses and another guide, we set forward at the time the first matin bell was rung, and passing over the common, by the side of Takely-wood, we found the road exceedingly bad, which occasioned so much delay, that we did not reach Bishops Storford before noon, and here I dined. I cannot help observing, that, upon reaching the inn door, I saw the same young man, with his riding coat and broad belt, who had passed me at Dunmow, standing there; he looked earnestly at me as I descended from my horse, but not as one who had seen me before. On examining his person and features, he so strongly resembled my Danbury guide, that I was almost tempted to speak to him; but I forbare. I found myself too much fatigued to proceed any farther on horseback; and being determined to reach Hertford that night, I hired a calash, and gave the driver a piece of silver to make the more haste.

"When I came to the entrance of the town of Ware, I was again surprised by the appearance of the young man, whom I had seen at Dunmore and Storford. He was now on horseback, and riding hastily by the calash, turned up a road to the right, which I since learned leads to Walton. "Surely," said I to myself, "this is some goblin, and not a man, who haunts me for some evil purpose." But after that time I saw him no more, and the subsequent events effaced from my mind the evil apprehensions his appearance had made; and indeed I know not to what purpose I have mentioned this trifling circumstance in the present narrative.

"When we reached Hertford, I depended entirely upon my guide for the selection of the inn where I was to take up my temporary residence. I begged of him to conduct me to such a one as would afford me proper accommodation, and where I might be certain of meeting with civility. He assured me, that

there was not a better house in the town than the Crescent in the High-street. Thither we went, and having entered the inn-yard, I saw, to my inexpressible satisfaction, my nurse herself talking with the inn-keeper. The noise our horses made occasioned them to look round. The good dame, who instantly recognized me, was greatly surprised at seeing me there; she sprang to the calash, and, assisting me to descend, caught me in her arms, and pressed me to her bosom with so much warmth of affection, that had I been her own child she could not have manifested more tenderness; when a moment afterwards, seeming to recollect herself, she excused the freedom she had taken. I repeated the embrace, and, grasping her hand, assured her I delighted to meet with her there; "for in truth," added I, "it was you alone I came hither to find." She called for the hostess, and caused us to be shewn to a room, where we might be by ourselves without any inter-

ruption; and scarcely was I seated before she expressed her anxiety to know by what means I had escaped from Gay Bowers, and traced her to Hertford. I related to her, as briefly as possible, the principal incidents that had occurred to me, from the time we parted at the baron's to the present meeting. She heard me with great attention, but not without uttering many ejaculations to the holy saints. The story of the spectre particularly attracted her notice: she has great faith in preternatural appearances, and believed it to be in reality a goblin; and the admonition, the warning voice of my good angel. When I had concluded my narrative, she shook, and said, "Holy Mother of God, there is some rank knavery abroad! Wot ye well, my dear young lady, had you not arrived this evening, I and my husband should have been away with the lark in the morning: and, would you believe it, we came upon a fool's errand,—my sister is in perfect health; she sent no

messenger, but was herself aghast at seeing us in so much hurry and confusion. Gads my life, we have been tricked; but who the traitor is, or wherefore he should have beset us so foully, I can't aread." I readily answered, "This deception, my dear nurse, is certainly one of those contrivances I may justly add to the enmity of my barbarous cousin. God forgive me if I prejudge him; but I fear it was done with the view of depriving me of your protection, in case I escaped from the hands of the murderers. He will find me," added I, "even here. He will trace me from inn to inn, where I took horses. I must seek an asylum: I need protection from some one powerful enough to vindicate the cause of injured innocence, and compassionate enough to do it for justice sake alone."[1] "By'r Lady," said she, grasping my hand, "I beseech you be not adawed; it shall go hard with me if I do not let the naughty baron in his seekings: leave it to

me; my husband and I will take you to a place of safety to-morrow, and lead those a fine wild-goose chase, who shall undertake to follow you." At this instant her discourse was interrupted by the arrival of her husband, who, when he entered the room, and saw me there, apologized for his breaking in upon us, and was about to withdraw; when the good dame called him back, and having informed him who I was, he paid his respects to me with much civility, and more decorum than one might have expected from a person of his rank; but in truth, upon further knowledge of his character, I found him to be a plain, judicious man, of few words; but the little he did say was generally much to the purpose. Some refreshment was then proposed, which was presently served up; and immediately after supper was ended the nurse and her husband withdrew for a few moments, and I saw him no more that night. She afterwards made me acquainted with the

treatment she had received at Gay Bowers, and the uneasiness she had sustained upon my account. I had no sooner parted from her at breakfast-time, it seems, than old Gaunt the steward came to her and declared, that he had received positive orders from his master for her instant dismissal. She pleaded very importunely to have the permission of seeing me once again before she left the house; but all her solicitations were to no effect. She tarried at Danbury the greatest part of the day, in hope that I might come up thither, and see her; when she saw that I did not in the afternoon, she came back to Gay Bowers, and again solicited a conference with me, if it were only for a few minutes, but could not obtain permission; on the contrary, Gaunt, the only person she saw, treated her with great insolence. She now returned home, and having procured a letter to be written to me by a confidential friend, her husband brought it the next day; but Gaunt

was inflexible, he would not deliver it to me, neither would he answer any question respecting my welfare. Not contented with these efforts, two days afterwards she came herself to the baron's, and having by her prayers and tears softened, as she supposed, the heart of the steward, obtained admittance; but instead of seeing me, she was ushered to the presence of the baron, who severely reprimanded her for the part she had taken in my behalf, and even threatened her with destruction, if he heard she busied herself any further about the matter. On her return to Danbury, she made every possible enquiry she could, but to no effect; there was not a soul that knew a syllable concerning me.

"It was now time for us to retire to rest, and the good dame insisted upon seeing me to my chamber herself; and observing that I was fatigued, helped me to undress, and afterwards sat down by the bed-side until I fell asleep. She called me at day-break, saying,

with a smile, "My dear Lady Darcy, I have provided for your safety, and shall give your enemies the check-mate I trow: but then you must do as I say, without letting and contradiction, or the charm will be nought after all." I did not at all comprehend what she meant; however, I relied implicitly on her care, and promised obedience. When we came down she insisted on my taking a small biscuit, soaked in some mulled clary, which the hostess had prepared; and while I was eating it she said, "The young lady, my good hostess, you think then can certainly be well accommodated in your friend's house at Storford, and perfectly free from all impertinent enquiries." "After what I have said to you," returned the hostess, "you may depend upon my recommendation." Hearing this part of the discourse related to me, I was about to answer, which my nurse perceiving, she clapped her finger upon her lip, and

called to her husband, who made his appearance in the inn-yard leading two horses; one of them, being more handsomely caparisoned than the other, was intended for me, and I was mounted upon it by myself, and the nurse rode behind her husband on the other; and thus we proceeded towards Ware, on the road to Storford. But we had no sooner passed through Ware, than my guide turned out of the main road into a bye lane, exceedingly narrow, at the back of the town, at the end of which we found a mean-looking drinking house. Here the nurse and her husband alighted, and he put their horse into a kind of out-house, desiring that it might remain there until the afternoon. This circumstance greatly surprised me, and I was proceeding a second time to make enquiry, when the nurse again prevented me by putting her finger to her mouth as before, saying in a whisper, "Hedges have ears." Having put up their

horse, the good people proceeded on foot, making me still continue on horseback. We passed a large park, and afterwards came again into several narrow lanes, leading from one to the other, and reached at length the Lodge, where you, my dear ladies, found the game-keeper's wife, sister to my dear nurse, and who possesses the same humanity and softness of disposition. I have been with her nearly three months, treated with much tenderness, and free from any interruption. This was the secret plan the good nurse had formed; the departure of her husband over-night was to borrow the horse I rode upon from some one in this neighbourhood, and the pretence of going to Storford was to mislead those my cousin might send to enquire after me. I have only to add, that when the good people introduced me to their sister, they took their leave, and, as I have since heard, actually reached Storford that night.—

Such is the conclusion of my long and melancholy history."

Lord Boteler not only gave her the strongest assurances of his protection, but promised, with her permission, to employ two or three of his acquaintances, eminently skilled in the law, to bring her cousin to severe account for his conduct. She thankfully accepted his offer, and, with becoming modesty, acknowledged the very great obligations she lay under to his lordship: but as it now grew late, and Emma had much exerted herself in relating the tale of her sorrows, the young ladies persuaded her to withdraw for the night: this she willingly acceded to.

In the morning, the young Baron Fitzallen of Marden arrived at Queenhoo-hall to pay his respects to Lord Edward Boteler, whose return he had heard of. Marden lying about half a mile from the Boteler mansion, and a

family intercourse having always been maintained between the two lords. After some conversation on various matters, Fitzallen requested Lord Boteler's company to dinner with him, and that he would let his daughter and niece be of the party; for he had not seen the Lady Emma, who, on notice of his arrival, had withdrawn, as her various sufferings had rendered her unequal to the task of meeting a stranger. To this request Lord Boteler gave his assent; though the ladies were unwilling to quit their new guest, which, after Fitzallen's departure, they mentioned to Lord Boteler, and he entreated them to persuade the young lady to accompany them. Emma, however, prevailed with the ladies to go without her, which with much difficulty they consented to do.

Being dressed for the visit, the ladies, after taking leave of Emma, went down to the parlour, where Lord Boteler awaited

their coming: they informed him, that their guest wished to decline the honour of the visit: her reasons he easily conjectured, and acquiesced in her refusal. They then set out on their visit for Marden.

5

SECTION VII.

CHAPTER I.

An Incident at Fitzallen's, and a Tale.

THE company having taken some refreshment, Fitzallen proposed a walk in his garden previously to the dinner being served up; which was readily acceded to, and especially as it was known that he had been making great improvements in it.

As they passed through the great hall, their attention was attracted by a tall thin man, with a long lank visage, about fifty years of age, but habited in garments of the newest fashion, made with the finest and most expensive stuffs that could be procured, and decorated in a tawdry manner with gold and

silver fringes, interspersed with pearls and gauds of gold. The points of his shoes were nearly a yard in length; the upper leathers cut into chequer-work, and laced upon the insteps with bobbins of gold thread. His hood was of scarlet samit, slashed and pounced by way of ornament; and the tippet, of blue and silver, reached to the ground.

Behind him, appeared two servitors in rich liveries, with badges on their shoulders, pulling along an aged man, whose garments were coarse and thread-bare; and these were followed by several of the villagers, of both sexes, who seemed to bewail the mistreatment of the old man.

Fitzallen addressed himself to the beau, and desired to know the cause of this visit.

"I comes, my lord," said he, "for justice against this grey-bearded flagrant."

"And what offence hath he committed?" said Fitzallen.

"Offence, my lord!" retorted the beau.—

"And it please your worship, he is very needy and poor, and dares to upbray, as thof he was a squire of estate to the value of a hundred pounds by the year. His cloak, my lord, is thread-bare, and his hosen is like a lattice; and therefore he must be an idle flagrant. He is, algates, a main saucy jack, my lord, and heeds not those more better than himself, who be clothed in tunics and hosen of samit, or wear tawny satin cloaks guarded with gold and silver, and has money in their pockets to buy a whole congregation of such swashbucklers. Oh! 'tis a pestilloun varment, and ought to be hanged!"

"But is the man's poverty so great a fault?" said the baron.

"Why, there it is, my lord," answered the beau: "the raptril is poor, and ought to been humble, and suspect his betterers. I warrant me, out of your lordship's hearing, he would call me a fool or a dotterel, and mayhap laugh at me to my beard. Is these things

befitting to a man of wealth and corpulence? shall such a crack-halter, without one cross in his pouch, be permitted to answer a gentleman, and make a May-game of me? I trow not; I trow your lordship will say not: And therefore I begs you will let the heels of that there sturdy beggar be laid in the stocks; aye, and give him a whipping into the bargain."

"If so be," replied the young baron, "his offence shall be found to merit such punishment:—but, I beseech you, be more explicit, and acquaint me with the nature and extent of his fault."

To this the beau replied, "I be sporting this morning, my lord, with my kestrel in my hand, according to the privilege of a man of corpulence and a gentleman. The bird, seeing its game, began to bate; and before I was prepared, up comes me this here lozel, crosses me the path without the least suspect, and frightened the hawk so sadly, that away

she flew, and made to the wood, and I have lost her: and you must know, that there hawk was one of the true breed; she cost me fifty golden angels, and her bells were right silver from Milhen. I called the knave to decount for his violence, and ordered my farlets to take him into jeopardy. I teld him, he is a scoundrel, to use such carriage to a gentleman, who is able to purchase a thousand such fagabonds: he returned me a department answer. I desires him to discover my hawk; when he imprudently laughed in my face. I has brought him before you."

"But did he come out of his way purposely to frighten your bird? or was he merely passing on the road?"

"I will not kiss the Angelists upon that point: but sure, my lord, it boots not; he ought to have see, that I are a gentleman, and well dressed, and not one to be interrupted by a patch-cloak beggar like he. See, my lord, all his garments is not worth a silver

thimble: and shall he dare to make his japes with me? Why, I can reduce a thousand angels of gold for every cross that he professes. They says as how the knave can read; that is a reproof of his idleness: for my part, I never reads, and is a franklin; while this here jack, with all his wit and his conning, be's as poor as a mouse in a belfry: and poverty smells main strong of knavery. —I beseech your worship, send him to the stocks."

"But surely," replied Fitzallen, "it will be just to hear his defence, before I punish him."

"I hope," interrupted the beau, "your lordship will not degrade me so far as to put this here jack upon a gentleman. If it please your honour, I have purchased my franklinship and my bearings from the harald, and paid full fifty angels of gold for my consistance; and should have been knighted, but

in sooth I cannot endure the sight of a naked sword."

"Knighted! *you* knighted!" replied the young baron, with surprise: "Why, if I mistake not, you was, time past, my father's tailor!"

"Your lordship's memory is good," replied he. "I thought you would not have remembered that, now I be a gentleman; or would have spared the depression.—By the mass bell! I made the constable of Stapleford put Jack, the bellows-mender of Watton, into the stocks, for calling me by that lozel name!—I can," said he, shaking a large money-bag, "bring my white bears to the stake, and my yellow jingle-boys to the bull-ring, as well as the best of them; and, marry, I have paid sauce for my puntillity, and am no more a vulgar man of trade; for the king of the hornoise tells me, I may claim precedence of any yeoman in this here county. And look you, my lord, thoff I says it, there are not a

man in the king's communion wears bettrer or more fashionality garments than I; my clothing are all of the newest cut, made of the more better stuffs, and put together with the most finest silks that the Cheap can deduce."

Fitzallen smiled; and, turning to the poor man, requested to know what he had to say in his own behalf.

"Little or nothing, my lord; for this gay gentleman has nearly told you the whole of the occurrence.—I was going through Bramfield-lane towards Hertford, and, turning short at Hookes-bushes, I came suddenly upon him. He held his hawk upon his fist; my appearance frightened her, and she flew away: But truly, my lord, the fault was all his own; he held his creance so gingerly, that the bird drew the bewits from the jesses, and, of course, could not be reclaimed. He then vented a whole torrent of abuse upon me, telling me he was a gentleman. My re-

ply was, such language ill became the character of a gentleman. He then ordered me to regain his hawk. I told him, that was not in my power; I had nothing to lure it with, but, no doubt, he had; for I could not suppose him to be unprovided with a bait, when the proverb says, *Men lure not hawks with empty hands*;—this he styles laughing at him. He then ordered his men to take me into custody: They did so; and here I am awaiting your lordship's decision."

Lord Boteler here whispered to the young baron; who bowed his head in token of assent, and demanded to know of the beau, if he had any thing farther to say against the old man?

He replied, flippantly, "Nothing, my lord; only that this here fellow, as I teld you, can read and write; and now, I thinks, these vagaries makes him idle, and keeps him poor. I never troubled my sconce with these here sort of things, and now I can buy every pig

of his father's sow; and I has my footmen, my pages, and my gentleman-usher, to walk before me; and I keep my chamberlain, and makes my clerk read to me every night out of a large new book, called the Marrow of Mobility, I bought of the king of hornoise; and so I learns all the practice of a gentleman."

"Go then, sir," replied Fitzallen; "Preserve the character you have assumed; and behave in such a manner as shall deserve respect, and, be assured, respect will follow; but for this old man, leave him with me, and I will devise a punishment equal to his crime."

The beau replied, "Let it be severe, your honour, for the sake of gentility; which must be supported. He is a poor hound, and ought to be taught how to suspect his betterers." So saying, he withdrew, followed by his two lackeys, to seek for his hawk.

"This fellow," said Fitzallen to the company, "is the strangest composition of pride and meanness that ever I met with. When he was in business, he lived in a garret in London, and went to all the ordinaries that are in the vicinity of the metropolis for cheapness sake. He never made but one meal in a day, and sometimes in two days; and then he ate so voraciously, that the cooks forbade him to come to their tables; for, though he paid but the same as another man, he ate the portion of two or three. He has, by meanness and shifting tricks, saved up a considerable sum of money; and now, as you see, he has purchased the privilege to bear arms, with the cognizance and title of a gentleman; and half starves himself, and those about him, to support the rank he has had the vanity to assume. 'Tis the most incorrigible fool in nature, and can feel the power of no argument that is not enforced by a good cudgelling.—Some time back, he

affected a swaggering vein, and was desirous of passing for a man of courage; but several sound beatings have convinced him, that his heart is misplaced for fighting. In short, he is the butt of every company with which he associates; yet has not sense enough to perceive, that they admit him merely to make him their laughing-stock."

"It is difficult for me, my dear," said Eleanor, addressing herself to Matilda, "to determine which I think the most prominent feature in this tailor-man's character, his impudence or his ignorance?"

"They are, my dear girl," said Lord Boteler, who overheard her, "usually companions, and generally keep pace with each other; fortunately, however, they bear their own antidote, and never fail to produce contempt in some cases, or pity in others, in rational minds." He then addressed himself to the old man in these words: "Surely, sir,

I have seen your face before now: Did you not, some years past, reside in London?"

The old man, bowing, replied: "I did, my lord; and my chief residence is in that city. I am, however, occasionally in this part of the country, for a week or two, as I can find the time, for the sake of the pure air."

"If I mistake not," returned the baron, "I purchased a book illuminated by you, containing the portraitures of our monarchs?"

"Your lordship," said he, "is not mistaken; you did me that honour."

The baron went on: "You are the man I want. I lost you on a sudden; and certainly, some time back, when I made enquiry after you, I heard that you was dead."

"As little worth, my lord," said he, "as one that was dead. Lost to the world, and to myself, my existence hardly deserved the name of life."

"Your misfortunes," returned the baron, "must surely have been very heavy ones, to oc-

casion such an heartfelt complaining.—Your name, I think, is Ingold, of the family of the Ingolds of Essex?"—The old man bowed.—"And I have heard, your father died in good circumstances: It was said that he left to you a fortune; if not an ample one, sufficiently large, with prudent handling, to have secured you not only from positive distress, but from that dependence which you place upon your abilities as an artist."

Then the old man, fetching a deep sigh, cast his eyes upon the ground; and, wiping a tear or two from them, replied:—"I would fain keep the secret buried in my own bosom; but that more of blame is attached to my conduct, than, perhaps, it really does deserve. To relate the story of my life, is but to expose my own imbecility. I am, in truth, the son of misfortune; but the evils that I have to complain of, are from my own imprudence: I am the dupe of every one who will take the pains to make me such: and

truly, I think, that neither time nor experience will ever teach me sufficiency of wisdom to encounter the deceptions of mankind. You say, my lord, my father died in good circumstances: it is true he did so; for he was possessed of several excellent freehold estates, which he willed to be divided between my brother and myself. To my brother, who was four years older than I, he devised two-thirds of his possessions; the other third ought to have been mine; but this dear parent, not being well versed in the requisite diction for wording a will, and the legal forms of causing it to be executed, neglected a very material part, which rendered the instrument invalid, and left me altogether to the mercy of my brother: and, in justice to myself, I must say, he took the full advantage that the law held out to him, by depriving me of every penny of my patrimony! But I have done: for, why should I, using the loquacity which age claims as its privilege, encroach on your

fair indulgence, and take up your time with a tiresome tale of sorrow? for, there are no uncommon incidents that mark my history; but the perplexities in which I have been involved, are such as have possibly happened, and without much variation, to a thousand others; yet to me, a foolish, fond old man, ill read in the history of the great world, and little knowing of men at large, and of their manners, these trifles appear, I doubt not, much magnified! I have no more to say, my lord."

"Nay, nay," answered Lord Boteler, "so be it that I do not intrude on the time of my noble host, I shall wish you to go forward with your story."

Fitzallen assured the baron, that he was perfectly at leisure; and that if Saint Clere and the ladies would defer their garden-walk until the dinner was finished, he would likely hear the sequel of the good man's misfortunes. St Clere and the ladies were perfect-

ly of the same opinion; the walk was deferred; and, the company retiring to a summer-parlour, Fitzallen led in the old man; who, being indulged with a seat next to Lord Boteler, proceeded in this manner:—

" The same unfortunate neglect in my father's will, which precluded me from the participation of his bounty, greatly affected my mother, who survived him; her income was so much straitened by it, that she had barely sufficient to support herself; and therefore, very little, of course, could be spared for me; and from her slender pittance alone, was I to be supported! I had forgotten to say, that I was an infant when my father died; so young, that I do not remember him, and I owe my protection to my mother's fostering: she was an excellent parent, and may Christ, my great Redeemer, reward her for her care!

" Well then, so soon as I was come to lad's estate, and it was thought proper to put me forward into the world, my dear mother al-

most beggared herself, to place me with an artist of eminence; not considering, dear soul! the impossibility of supplying me in the manner my situation required. I was ill clothed, and altogether unfurnished with most of the materials necessary for the prosecution of my profession: my patched clothing subjected me daily to the ridicule of my fellow-pupils; I had no means of joining them in any of their amusements; and, in fact, I was made the drudge of the household. The Almighty Protector of mankind bestowed upon me a cheerful mind, which supported me through these difficulties; and though I saw no favourable prospect before me, still I trusted that He would not forsake me; and I have since thought that it was better for me not to have had such supplies of money as my comrades had; necessity restrained me from following many vicious indulgencies which they fell into: for, I fear I should indubitably have imitated their examples, if it had been in my power

to have gratified my inclination; but pardon me, I am wandering widely from the subject.

"So soon as I had passed my time of servitude, without money, and without friends to help me forward, I was plunged as it were into the world, with a mind abstracted from the world; my new situation in life soon became disgusting; and I was unreasonable enough to dislike the world, because I was not well acquainted with it. In the midst of society, I fled from society; and sought from books that gratification of mind I could not meet with, in what is called social life: and though, from my assiduity, I acquired some reputation, and even marks of public honour in my profession, I had not the least proper idea of applying these favourable circumstances, as I ought to have done, to my own advantage; my want of worldly knowledge made me the tool of artful and designing men: in short, I have laboured much, and others have enjoyed the fruits of my industry.

"At the age of five-and-twenty, I married an amiable woman, one who, I trust, loved me well, and one I loved.—Gracious God! she deserved it, and is now a saint in heaven!"—(Here he paused a while, and wiped his eyes; for, the tears flowed apace from them; and then he proceeded.)—"She blessed me with three dear pledges of our mutual love; two sons, and one daughter: unfortunate daughter! whose birth cost the life of her parent, and she herself survived but few months!

"The loss of my wife, in whom my soul was wrapped up, made me nearly frantic; and nothing but the living for my children's benefit, made life endurable."—(Here again he wiped away the tears; and, after a short pause, went on.)

"The estates which should have belonged to me, as well as all the property my father left behind him, were of little service to my inconsiderate brother: he assumed a state

beyond his income, in order to acquire more consequence in the world; his attempts, however, were unsuccessful; his plans were disconcerted; and, in a short time, his estates were sold or deeply mortgaged, his personal property dissipated, and, had not death befriended him, by taking him from his trouble, he would most probably have spent the latter part of his life in misery and distress.

"My dear mother, as I have said, was cruelly circumscribed in her income; and that was made more strait by frequent failures in payment, on my brother's side." "However," said she to me, "these defalcations are in your favour; I have carefully registered them all; at my death, these monies must be paid up, and they shall be yours: they are all I can leave to you, and a small recompence, truly, for the losses you have sustained."

"Soon after this, I lost my dear parent! I was, unfortunately, at a distance when she

died: my brother's wife was with her at the time; and she, God forgive her! received, from my expiring parent, this her last legacy sealed up, and directed for me; together with a letter for her husband, in which was contained his mother's solemn order, as he valued her blessing, to deal justly with me, and ratify her donation.

"No sooner was the breath departed from my mother, than the letters, instead of being delivered according to the directions, were cast into the fire; and so, my claim being made void, I was basely robbed a second time.

"Three years after the death of my mother, my brother died; and all that remained of his possessions, he bequeathed to his wife; and in very sooth, the bequest was reduced to so narrow a compass, that she had little cause of boasting. I turned this circumstance in my mind; and, putting far from me the injuries I had sustained, I took her

to my own house; I shared my humble crust with her; and truly, I will say, while that crust lasted, she manifested professionally the appearance of affection; she even at times deceived me so far, that I thought her capable of being generous. Foolish man that I was! ought I have expected the sun to shine at midnight? or that she, who never conceived an idea unconnected with selfishness, should have changed her nature? On my soul, I thought so! But I forget myself.

"This sister of mine was of a gay turn, and certainly the most excellent economist in dress that I ever saw; she affected elegance, and, with little expence, maintained a show of finery that placed her on a footing with persons of opulence; and, at the same time, she well supported the carriage and deportment of a person of consequence: for, she really possessed strong natural talents, which she improved by reading elegant authors, and associating with her superiors;

and I will readily acknowledge that I have spent many an hour in her company, not only with amusement, but also with improvement.

"She had a kind of fascinating art, which I could not well account for, of giving consequence to the most trifling donations, and making such things as were intrinsically of little or no value seem worth much. This inflated shadow, as I may call it, of liberality, is something like the tricks of our jugglers, who give you a crown or an angel, inclosed in a box, to hold, and then tell you to take the coin for your pains; but, on opening the box, you are sure to find it empty, yet cannot help praising the deception by which you are cheated. And she took special care that the smallest present should not pass unnoticed. I remember well, while I was in retirement, she put into a parcel of my clothes, that was sent to me, a pair of old moth-eaten hose,

which had been my brother's, not worth a single cross; and to them was attached a label, on which was pompously inscribed—*A Gift*.

"I have often wondered, that a mind so well informed could be so totally absorbed in meanness and selfishness, or that a female heart could have been so totally divested of tenderness, sincerity, and of justice!—But I must recall my words. That heart was not divested of feeling; it was open to the passion of love; which, truly, was the constant subject of her pen; and, if it is agreeable, I recollect, and can repeat to you, one of her sonnets on this subject:

"I pr'ythee, why dost weep, my child;
And whither hast thou strayed away?"—
'Mamma whipped me;—called me wild;
And said I should not go to play.'—

"But whither, baby, wilt thou go?
For food and clothing must be had."—
'Food thou wilt give me; that I know;
And am not I full well yclad?'—

"Thou wilt outgrow thy clothing soon;
And food is grown extremely dear.
Go home, my child; 'tis nearly noon;
We have no welcome for thee here."—

'Indeed! no welcome!—Then I'll try
The virtue of this potent dart;
That breast, unkind to charity,
I'll pierce, and wound thy frozen heart.'—

"Have mercy! for I know thee now,
Sly God of Love! and I obey;
I'll listen to my lover's-vow,
And follow where he leads the way."

Her folly, in this point of view, was as conspicuous as her selfishness in all others.

"A spruce Hibernian, young enough to have passed for her son, supposing her to have been possessed of a large fortune, paid his addresses to her; and this gay springal, with the assistance of a fine feather in his cap, and a sword by his side, (for he was a soldier,) soon won her heart. She affected all the airs of youthful levity, and made her-

self a bye-word among her acquaintance; and would have sacrificed every thing that was dear to her, even her money, for her dear leman's sake. But my brave spark finding, upon minute enquiry, that, notwithstanding her specious appearance, her resources were very much straitened, and that the little she possessed departed from her at her death, bade her good-morrow, and, without paying the least regard to her sighs, her tears, and her fainting fits, he forsook her for the pursuit of superior game.

"She had been some time with me, when I sunk under a very heavy pressure of misfortunes, which, joined with ill health, fell upon me at once, and crushed me to the ground. I was obliged to give up my all, to satisfy the demands upon me; and even in this act of justice, my evil genius pursued me. I reposed my trust in a man nearly related to me; I assigned over to him the power to dispose of

my effects; and, shame upon me! I hid myself like a coward from those who would not have hurt a hair of my head.—Gracious Heaven! the villain I entrusted sold my effects indeed, and satisfied some few trifling demands for colour sake, but converted the rest of the money to his own use, and then vilified my character with my creditors; and, lest I should have come forward to defend myself, he frightened me with threats they never made, and soon after left me to my total ruin, he himself becoming a bankrupt. This event proved him to have been a villain for the sake of villainy only; because he well knew, that the money he cruelly defrauded me of could in no wise do him the least good.

"My creditors, on the other hand, were taught to believe, that he had paid me the money, and that I was spending it in idleness, instead of appropriating it to the satis-

fying of their demands. Exasperated, as they justly might be, by such a report, they united against me, and used every means to discover my retreat. They were successful; for I never disguised myself, nor changed my name, but resided in this part of the country. Two of them, having a proper writ for the apprehension of my person, came to Hertford, with the intention of laying me in prison; but Providence was pleased to prevent my falling into such disgrace. These men chanced to come late to Hertford; and hearing, that the place where I resided was nearly four miles distant, and the road a bye one, and exceedingly indifferent for those that were unacquainted with it, agreed to sleep at the inn, and defer the business with me to the morning.

"On that very night, according to my usual custom, I was sitting up long after the family was gone to bed, and brooding over

my misfortunes. Having called the different circumstances of my life to my remembrance, I took my pen, and composed the following lines;* which, perhaps, will better express

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I.

* " Who calls?"—' A stranger passing by;
Benighted, weary, and astray;
He asks relief, for charity,
And shelter till return of day.'—

II.

" What help, in such a woeful shed,
Canst thou expect so late to find?
The night is cold, and I'm in bed;
To wake me, stranger, was unkind."—

III.

' Forlorn, and fainting, here I lie;
A fellow-creature's claim I make:
Permit me not for want to die,
But help! oh, help! for mercy's sake!'—

IV.

" Hold on your way, and you shall find
A wealthy lordling's open gate.
Go, friend; and be your welcome kind!
He banquets oft, and revels late."—

the melancholy turn of my mind, than I can do it by a simple narrative:

I.

What are the beauties of the opening morn
  To one, whose soul is sickening with its grief!
If the sad heart by comfort be forlorn,
  No splendor can administer relief!
    The noon-tide glories of the day
    Are lost to me, or bring dismay;

V.

'Must I, then, perish at thy door?'—
  "Not so; the rich man's board is spread."—
'Alas! he spurneth thence the poor!'—
  "And I have but one crust of bread;—

VI.

"Of barley bread, full coarse and stale;
  My children's breakfast that, and mine:
Cheese I have none, nor beer, nor ale,
  Nor bacon-hock, nor flesh of kine."—

VII.

'One crust is all that I require,
  For dainty cates are not my due;
'Tis cold and wet; a little fire
  Permit, and saints shall comfort you.'—

Nor less I dread returning night:
My care-worn mind
Courts darkness *now*, and *now* the light,
Nor ease can find;
Aternately
From both I fly,
And seek, I know not what, new remedy!

VIII.

" May woe betide the churlish wight,
Whose ruthless heart no pity knows!
I will arise, the fire I'll light;—
Come in, for chill the north gale blows.

IX.

" See, here; 'tis all the bread I've got."—
' Enough, enough! I ask no more:
Hereafter be thy labours less;
May favouring saints increase thy store!'—

X.

" Holy Saint Thomas, is it true!
The scraps of bread, both small and stale,
Have loaves become, full large and new;
The pitcher foams with mantling ale!

XI.

" The fire, too, blazes high and free,
Yet small of wood is its supply;
Nor aught consumed it seems to be,
Although the boughs be old and dry!

II.

Nor can I find in solitude relief,
Sequestered from the haunts of human kind,
In humble life; there is no cure for grief:
I fly in vain; I fly not from my mind:
With dire turmoil grief rankles there,
And broods in anguish o'er despair.
Delusive is all hope, and vain,
In life to find
The remedy for soul-felt pain:
The troubled mind

XII.

"Thou art no beggar; but, I ween,
Some fairy elf, or favouring sprite;
Or, in disguise, some angel sheen,
Descended from the realms of light."—

XIII.

'Enquire no farther where I dwell,
Nor who I am. For thee to know
Let it suffice, thou hast done well,
And I my blessing will bestow:

XIV.

'Good health shall make thy labours light,
And plenty at thy board attend;
Stern death shall not thy soul affright,
For Charity shall thee befriend.'

No soft repose
Nor pleasure knows,
But longs the tedious term of life to close.

III.

Yet with untimely death comes black dismay:
The thought pervades my agitated soul!
Shall I to ceaseless horror wend my way,
And seize the fatal dagger, string, or bowl?—
Forbid, ye guardians of mankind!
And saints, to mercy most inclined,
Forbid the deed! Unarm the hand
That dares rebel,
Incited by the nefarious band
Of fiends from hell.
They would rejoice,
If, by such choice,
I fell below the reach of mercy's voice!

IV.

Protecting angels! with rebuke severe,
Crush those rebellious thoughts that haunt my mind;
And from my heart expel each guilty fear,
The dregs impatience forms and leaves behind:
My hope, now ready to expire,
Revive, and fan the latent fire!
Oh, bid her live to soothe my care,
And manifest
A future prospect, calm and fair;
Where, ever blest,
From sorrow's night,
Withdrawn to light,
My God I shall behold in glory bright!

"I had scarcely completed this poem, (which pardon me for reciting,) when I heard the outer-gate open, and the footsteps of a horse coming up the yard. The barking of the dogs announced the approach of a stranger; I went immediately to the window, but the night was too dark for me to discover who it was. I had not stood there long, before I heard my name called twice or thrice. I opened the window, and a voice, I was well acquainted with, requested me to come down. "It is my friend, Julian, the host of the Bull, or my ears deceive me," said I. "You are not deceived," answered he; "Come down quickly, for I have something of importance to communicate."

"I hastened down; when he, alighting from his horse, came into the parlour, and thus addressed me:

"There were two strangers from London, who sleep at my house this night. They made much enquiry after you, which led me

to attend to their discourse; and surely, if I am not greatly mistaken, they have a writ against you; for one of them said, *By this time to-morrow, the unthrift shall be cooling his heels in Hertford jail.*—I instantly took horse, and came over to you; for I really value you as a friend. Judge you, then, how far there may be foundation for such threatening, and act for yourself accordingly."

"My dear friend," said I, seizing his hand, "you have, in good sooth, done me a most important service. On my soul, I have committed no felonious action! My misfortunes have made me debtor to those men; and my poverty is the only cause of their grievance.—But I beseech you, my dear friend, advise me how I shall act in this unfortunate situation."

"To this he replied, "Come to Hertford with me; I will lodge you in a distant part of my house. You will be there in security, for they will never suspect that you would fly

thither to avoid them; and to-morrow, while they are in pursuit of you, I will convey you to a place of safety."

"This proposal, however, I had not courage enough to accede to;—for I am ever more timid than wise;—but resolved to set off before sun-rise, and get to Hatfield with all the speed I could, whence I doubted not to find some ready conveyance to London; for I determined to meet my creditors, and, if possible, to prevail on them to have patience with me. My friend did not oppose this resolution; but, grasping my hand, he recommended me to the protection of God, and took his leave.

"I returned to my chamber; and, when I cast my eyes upon my two sleeping infants, (for they slept by my side,) my courage forsook me: my heart was full; I sat down, and wept!—"Poor dear babes, and must I leave you to the protection of strangers! Great God, be thou their protector!"

"As soon as I had sufficiently recovered myself, I sat down, and wrote a letter to the good people of the house, informing them as briefly as possible of my wretched situation; and begging them to have compassion on the forlorn infants; promising that they should certainly hear from me again in the course of a few days.—This letter I left upon my table.

"I did not undress myself, but lay down a while upon the bed; and the moment I perceived the dawn of day, I stole from my room, and quitting the house with as little noise as possible, I crossed the orchard, the back way, in haste, fearing my pursuers should get sight of me, nor stopped until I reached Hatfield; where I thought myself secure for the present, and ventured to take some slight refreshment, while I was waiting in expectance of a carriage, by which I might get to London, and, if possible, that night.

"Oh, blessed Lord, what were my sufferings that dreadful morning! Mercy forefend, that my enemies should feel such anguish as I did! "What," thought I, "will become of my children!"—Well, a carriage did come; and, in the evening, I reached London.

"Meantime, those who sought after me, having missed their path, did not reach the house until the family were all risen, and sitting at breakfast. My absence had not been noticed; for I used frequently to walk out early in the morning, and sometimes did not return till noon.

"My two children were taking their milk when the Londoners entered, having Giles, the constable of Hertford, with them to serve the writ. On their enquiry after me, it was found that I was not at home; but they, suspecting some collusion, would not be pacified, swearing that they were determined to have me at all events, alive or dead, for they had a warrant against me to that purpose.

My little ones, hearing this, began to cry; and the whole house was in the utmost confusion. Fruitless search was made for me, and no hole or cranny was left unscrutinized. They were at length persuaded that I had made my escape, and the letter left upon my table confirmed the same; but by what means I had been informed of their coming they could not any way divine; unless, as one of them said, "I dealt with the devil."

"Being satisfied I was not to be found there, they went back to Hertford, threatening vengeance; where, leaving the writ in the sheriff's office, they returned to London, little satisfied with the success of their journey. At London I met them, with the rest of my creditors, as I had determined to do. I laid the whole of my situation before them without the least shadow of disguisement; and they were satisfied, that it was through the villainy of my relation that they had been defrauded of the monies arising from the sale

of my effects. They blamed me, indeed, (and, surely, I was much blame-worthy,) for flying from them; but, at the same time, commiserating my misfortunes, they accommodated me with time to make them remuneration; and, matters being thus settled, in six days time I returned to my children, with my heart much lighter, and with some prospect of better days to come.

"While these troubles were passing successively over my head, my sister-in-law had ingratiated herself with a widow lady of opulence. And no wonder; for the smooth tongue and mildness of deportment, which she could assume to a charm when it was her interest so to do, were certain passports to the favour of those who loved flattery.—Here she was upon the footing of a companion, and lived free from any great expence.

"Soon after the settlement of my affairs, it became necessary for me to reside in London; and on my arrival, I took an early op-

portunity of visiting her.—My reception, indeed, was cool enough. We parted, however, without the least breach of civility; and, as I had no expectation of assistance from her, I could not attribute this coolness to the fear that I should trouble her with my solicitations, but imagined she had met with some casual disappointment that had soured her temper.

"During my absence from town, most of the business that had been given to me, was turned into other channels, and I often found the greatest difficulty in procuring employment; and the sums of money I was necessitated, from time to time, to make good in favour of my former creditors, kept me in constant poverty. Through the assistance of a friend, I procured a situation for my eldest son, which took him from my hands, or it would have been impossible for me to have subsisted. It chanced, however, after a severe illness, and previous want of employ-

ment, I was reduced to my last cross, which necessity also required for the purchase of a small quantity of food, the larger part of which I gave to my dear child; and my subsistence for that day was a crust of bread and a cup of water. "But," said I, "what shall be done for the morrow?"—I had then a manuscript to illuminate; but the person who employed me would not advance one farthing, and it was impossible for me to complete it in less than four days. Still, as I sat working with a heavy heart, I said to myself, "And what shall be done for the morrow? A noble would be sufficient; it would save me from starving; and I can return it, even with interest, at the four days end."—Here I thought of my brother's wife. "Surely," said I, "she will readily accommodate me with the loan of a noble."—I instantly sent my son to his aunt; and pursued my work with more alacrity, because I was confident of success.

"It was evening before the child returned. When he entered the door, I held out my hand to receive the noble. The child innocently unclosed his empty hand in mine, and, totally unconscious of what I felt, said, "My aunt gives her love to you, and bids me assure you, that there is nobody to whom she would have sooner lent a noble; but she has made a vow never to borrow nor to lend, and, therefore, requests, you would not, in future, *trouble* her on so unpleasant a subject."

"The cold eastern blight is not more forcibly felt by the tender blossoms just unfolded to the sun, than this unfeeling message was felt by me;—my heart's blood was chilled, and I was near fainting!—The child, the little child, perceived my violent agitation; and, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed, "Are you not well, my father?" As soon as I recollected myself, I took him by the hand, and said, "Have you had any thing to eat, my child?" "Oh, yes," said he, "I supped

daintily, and had some hypocras made sweet to drink." "So far," said I, "all is well:" and then, throwing myself upon the bed, I hid my face from him, and gave a loose to sorrow.

"I was, as you, my noble hearers, will doubtless readily conclude, so much agitated by finding my sanguine expectations so cruelly annihilated, that I was scarcely conscious of what I did. A thousand thoughts, inimical to repose, pervaded my imagination; and all the horrors of poverty depressed my soul. I attempted to close my eyes, but to sleep was impossible. I anxiously wished for the morning; and when the morning came, though bright and clear, it brought with it additional terrors; and when I saw my dear child, who, totally ignorant of the miseries which rent my heart, was sleeping soundly, I could not refrain from tears; and, clasping my hands together in the agony of my soul, I exclaimed, "And must this innocent starve al-

so? Forbid it, gracious heaven!" I uttered this sentence with so much energy, that I awakened the dear boy; he looked up with a smile, and said, "Did you call me, my father?"—I could not answer him; but, girding my tunic, I cast my mantle over my shoulders, and bade him sleep again, adding, that I should return anon. And forthwith I quitted the house, like one bereft of his senses.

"The way I took was merely accidental; nor was I in the least conscious whither I was going until some time after my departure; at length, on recollecting myself, I cast my eyes around me, and found myself in the fields near Islington. "Heaven help me!" said I, looking towards the great city; and then stood for a space, leaning against the rails before the White-Conduit, whither many people were assembled to drink the waters.

"While I was gazing about, some one tapped me gently upon the shoulder; and, on my turning towards him, I saw it was a person of opulence, who had formerly been an intimate acquaintance of mine; but we had not seen each other for a considerable length of time. He took me by the hand, and we expressed our mutual surprize at meeting so unexpectedly. He enquired with great tenderness concerning my situation in life; and I gave him a short detail of my misfortunes, which seemed greatly to affect him. I had no sooner ended my melancholy story, than he slipped two angels of gold into my hand, saying, "My dear friend, I am now in town for some days; you will find me, any morning, at Thomas the goldsmith's, in the Cheap. Call upon me as soon as you can make it convenient, and it shall go hard but we will consult upon some plan to set you forward once more in life."

"I was much astonished at his generous conduct, and proceeding to express my soul-felt gratitude; when, laying his finger upon his lip, he said, "Let me see you; that is all;—adieu!" He then joined some company that had just arrived.

"All-gracious Providence, and dare I repine!" said I to myself, as I put my treasure into my gipsire. I then hastened home as lightly as though I had borrowed the wings of an eagle. I sent my son to purchase such things as were necessary for our subsistence, and I sat down to my business with a cheerful heart. My undertakings were successful; and, being assisted by an opulent friend in the prosecution of a larger work, which I brought before the public, and which was favourably received, I was enabled to satisfy all the demands that were made upon me; and, through the interference of my patron, my youngest son was placed in a situation to

pass through the world with credit and comfort. I have now no one but myself to provide for; and I hope to complete a life of trouble with tranquillity, and to lay down my grey hairs in the grave with peace."—Here the old man ceased.

"There is one circumstance in your history," said Lord Boteler, when the old man had concluded his narrative, "which strikes me as a very singular one. I mean, that when you were so sorely distressed for a small and merely temporary relief, you should have been so destitute of friends, in a city where you had long resided, that you could not turn to one who would have assisted you with the loan of a single noble."

"The question naturally occurs, my lord; nor was I in reality so forlorn as I thought myself to be. There were several who, had

they known the real situation of my circumstances, would have readily assisted me with ten times that sum; but I know well that I had in former undertakings frequently been obliged to solicit these friends, and had frequently disappointed them. I had made the calculations of monies that I wanted much lower than were requisite; and, fearful of refusal, have even asked for much smaller sums. By this imprudence, I involved myself in difficulties, which every day became more pressing and intricate. I have totally lost to myself every advantage that I had proposed; and such of the monies borrowed as were returned, were not returned punctually.—I was therefore ashamed to make application to them on this occasion. I did not deserve their confidence, and, therefore, I did not dare to ask it."

"This circumstance, surely," returned the baron, "if it were known to your sister-in-law, will plead in mitigation of her conduct. She

feared you would be, as it were, a continual pensioner on her, had she complied with your request. She had but little, as you have owned; and, had she opened her hand too widely, might have brought herself into unpleasant difficulties, without perhaps affording you any permanent service."

"It is true, my lord: She certainly knew my weakness, for I never sought to hide it from her; and, no doubt, her reasoning was built upon the foundation on which you have placed it, and it does justice to her prudence; but, as I never solicited her for a farthing before, and this so small a request, in sooth I do think, taking all things into due consideration, that what we give to her prudence must be deducted from her humanity."

The company seemed very well pleased with the old man's history. Fitzallen ordered the

reve to provide him refreshment in the refectory; and, as he left the room, Lord Boteler desired to see him at Queenhoo-Hall on the morrow.—" I have," said he, " a manuscript to illuminate, for which I will pay you your own price; and you shall be welcome to proper lodging, and your board at my seneschal's table, whenever you come into this part of the country."

The old man made his most grateful acknowledgments for the favour done him, and withdrew, promising to be with the baron in the morning.

As soon as he had left the room, Eleanor expressed herself as greatly delighted at the invitation of the artist; " because," said she, " I will improve myself in my drawing under his tuition; and for that purpose I will pay my court to this melancholy old man. I particularly admire him," added she, " for the love he bore to his wife; for, as far as I

can learn from his story, he has not been married a second time, but lives single in honour of her memory."

The seneschal now entered the parlour, and informed his master, that the dinner was on the table.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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